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ON SEVERAL

RELIGIOUS and IMPORTANT

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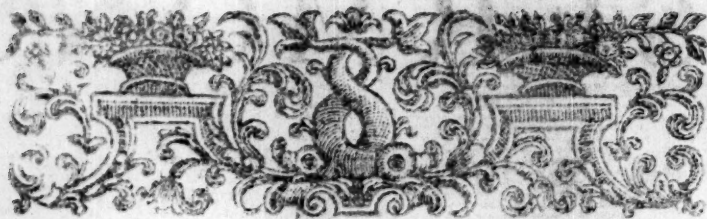
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*Late Rector of Aishreigney, Devon, and
Chaplain to the Right Reverend the Bishop
of Gloucester.*



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M.DCC.XLVIII.



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AND

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AND MOST GRATEFULLY

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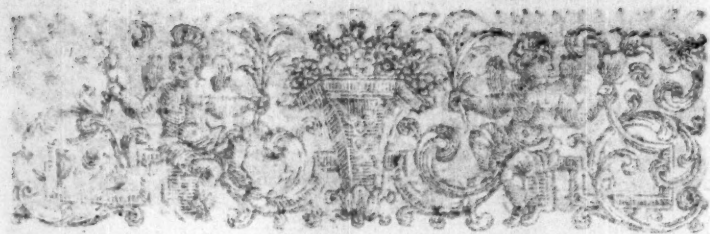
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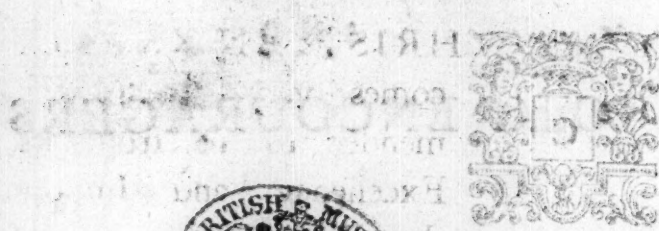
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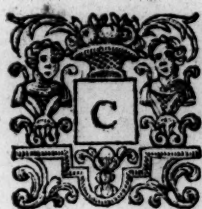
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The Association of
SUSSEX



The inducement and motive to the
partially to this Court, and in
last end in our salvation, the Holy Spirit
is promised to support and lead us
These are powerfully enforced from the
lation we stand in to God, as his chosen
his subjects, and his servants; as well as
from the Motives of Interest drawn from
the Value and irreparable Loss of the Soul.
And that the Performance of our Duty may
be acceptable, it must be in the Measure
of it unworldly and in its Progress per-
petual.



*The Argument and Connexion of
the following DISCOURSES.*



CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE SERM.

comes very strongly recom-
mended to us from its own
Excellency and Importance ;
that Branch of it especially re-

lating to the *Satisfaction of Christ*, which is
the *meritorious Cause* of our Justification ; as
Faith, when sound, lively and practical is its
conditional one.

I.

II.

III.

To induce and enable us to attend ef-
fectually to this Condition, that it may at
last end in our Salvation, the Divine Grace
is promised to support our best *Endeavours*.
These are powerfully enforced from the Re-
lation we stand in to God, as his *Children*,---
his *Subjects*,---and his *Servants* ; as well as
from the Motives of Interest drawn from
the *Value* and irreparable *Loss* of the Soul.---
And that the Performance of our Duty may
be acceptable, it must be in the Measure
of it *universal*, and in its Progress *per-*
petual.

IV.

V. VI.

VII.

VIII.

IX. X



THE
CONTENTS.

S E R M. I.

1 Cor. ii. 2. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Page 7

S E R M. II.

1 Tim. iii. 6. Who gave himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Page 41

S E R M. III.

Galat. iii. 16. Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law; but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law: For by the Works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. Page 79

S E R M. IV.

Philipp. ii. 12, 13. ---Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling. For it is God, that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own Pleasure. Page 121

S E R M.



THE CONTENTS.

S E R M. I.

- I Cor. ii. 2. *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* Page 1

S E R M. II.

- I Tim. ii. 6. *Who gave himself a Ransom for all, to be testified in due Time.* 41

S E R M. III.

- Galat. ii. 16. *Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law: For by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified.* 79

S E R M. IV.

- Philipp. ii. 12, 13. -----*Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling. For it is God, that worketh in you both to will and do, of his own Pleasure.* 121

The CONTENTS.

S E R M. V.

1 St. John iii. 2. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear, what we shall be: But we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

p. 155

S E R M. VI.

St. Matth. vi. 33. *But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.*

193

S E R M. VII.

Rom. vi. 16. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are, to whom ye obey; whether of Sin unto Death; or of Obedience unto Righteousness?*

225

S E R M. VIII.

St. Matth. xvi. 26. *For what is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

261

S E R M. IX.

St. Luke xi. 42. --- *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

293

S E R M. X.

Gal. vi. 9. *Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due Season we shall reap if we faint not.*---

327



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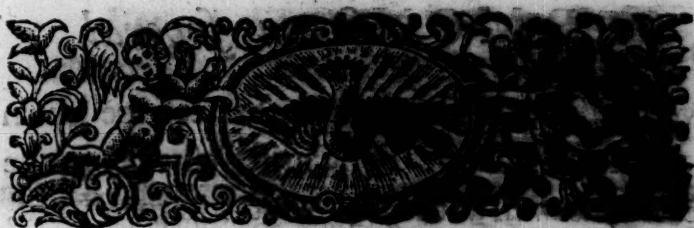
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12 JY 62

E R R A T A.

Page 11. Line 22. for *mention'd*, read *maintain'd*. p. 13. l. 8. after *him*, dele *self*. p. 18. l. 4. for *so* r. *to*. p. 21. l. ult. for *undergo*, r. *undergo*. p. 39. l. 20. for *the* in, r. in *the*. p. 154. l. 15. for *excluse*, r. *exclusive*. p. 185. l. 12. for *ever*, r. *even*. p. 199. l. 25. dele *of*. p. 210. l. 20. after *urge*, r. *them*. p. 223. l. 1. for *no*, r. *nothing*. p. 236. l. ult. dele the 1st Word *the*. p. 269. l. ult. for *Man*, r. *Men*.



S E R M O N I.



I Cor. ii. 2.

*For I determined not to know any
thing among you, save Jesus
Christ, and him crucified.*



S the greatest Subjects of the several Princes of the Earth have always esteemed the ministerial Attendance on their Sovereigns to be no way unsuitable to, or unworthy of, their Rank and Quality; but rather a Preferment, which the most Ambitious might justly be fond of: So does our Apostle extreamly delight and glory in the Service of his Royal Master; in this, and in his other Epistles often calling himself the *Steward* and *Embassador* of Jesus Christ. Which is, indeed, the highest Title he could

SERM. I.

B. give

SERM. give himself,-----the highest that can be given
 I. to any Man living : For Christ Jesus being the
 greatest, as well as the best Master in the World,
the King of kings, and Lord of lords (a).
 To receive and to execute his Commands must
 needs be the most noble Employment, and
 supreme Honour, which can accrue to Mor-
 tals.

AND this St. Paul was not only sensible
 of, but, looking upon himself to stand in
 a very near Relation to his Lord by repre-
 senting his Person, and acting by his Com-
 mission, he made it his whole Business to
 serve him by setting forth his Glory and
 Goodness in the Redemption of Mankind.
 Which yet he did not think it expedient to
 display *with Excellency of Speech*, or hu-
 man *Wisdom* (tho' no Man was better qua-
 lified than himself for such a Work either
 by Eloquence or Learning): But he chose
 to declare *the Testimony of God*, as he told
 the *Corinthians (b)*, with that Simplicity and
 Plainness which became the Gospel of Christ.
 And the Reason he here alledges in the
 Text, for so doing, even because *he deter-*
mined not to know, or make known any
thing among them, save Jesus Christ, and
him crucified.

THIS

(a) Rev. xvii. 14.

(b) 1 Cor. ii. 1.

THIS was the Sum and Substance of all that great Man's Preaching and Writing, and is in Truth, the last End of the Ministry of the Gospel which was ordained on Purpose to plant, propagate, and establish the Knowledge of Jesus Christ in the World: That Mankind might not be ignorant of their great Deliverer, by whom they may, and without whom, they cannot be rescued from the miserable Circumstances of their Nature: For, as St. Peter informed the Jews, (c) *There is no Salvation in any other, neither is there any other Name under Heaven given amongst Men, whereby we must be saved.* All who ever were or shall be admitted to Pardon, Grace and Mercy from *Adam* inclusive, through all succeeding Generations down to the End of Time, shall enjoy the Blessing through the alone Merits and Satisfaction of Christ. It is for his Sake altogether, that God is pleased to accept of our sincere though imperfect Endeavours to obey and fulfil his Will; and consequently, in vain is it to have Recourse to any other Saviour.

THEY are not the abstruse Notions of the Philosophers, nor the entertaining Eloquence

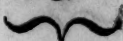
B 2

of

(c) Acts iv. 12.

SERM. of the Orators, nor the Spirit and Fire of
 I. the Poets, which can bring us to our ultimate Happiness. Such Guides may lead us up and down in the Wilderness of this Life; but it is *Jesus*, of whom *Joshua* was the Type, who must introduce us into the true *Canaan*. Arts and Sciences may amuse, or even assist us in the right Management of our temporal Affairs; but the Gospel only can train us up for, and conduct us to our eternal Inheritance,-----that Gospel! which reveals Christ Jesus unto us; and therefore reveals him, that we may know him and the Efficacy of his Sacrifice to Salvation. Which Branch of Science the Apostle does not only prefer before all other mental Improvements, but before all worldly Acquisitions whatsoever. *What Things*, says he, *were Gain to me, those I counted Loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the Loss of all things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ (d)*. Having discovered such an amazing Treasure of Wisdom, he found it so very excellent and valuable, that he reckoned he should have been an immense Loser, had he missed of this, though

(d) Phil. iii. 7, 8.

though in the room of it he should have SERM.
gotten all that a misjudging World thinks I.
desirable. 

AND, Goodness being always communica-
tive of itself, the holy Man was far from
concealing what he had thus happily dis-
covered. Nay his Zeal for the Honour of
God and the Good of Man, prompted him,
in Spite of the bitterest Opposition, and at
the Hazard of Life itself, to *spea*k and de-
clare *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even
the hidden Wisdom which God ordained be-
fore the World unto our Glory (e).* So that
he persevered in preaching Christ and him
crucified, notwithstanding there were many
in those Days, as well as in these, that were
offended at it *We preach, says he, Christ
crucified, to the Jews a Sumbling-block, and
to the Greeks Foolishness; But unto them which
are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the
Power of God, and the Wisdom of God (f).*---
To such as attended to the Apostles Doctrine
and were converted by it, the Gospel ap-
peared to be the Product of infinite Wisdom
and Power, equally wise in the Contrivance,
and powerful in the Execution and Effect.

B 3

BUT

(e) 1 Cor. ii. 7.

(f) 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

6 SERMONS on several

SERM,

I.

BUT they, who pride themselves in their worldly Wisdom, shall, as a Judgment upon them for their incorrigible Vanity, be left destitute of that, which is from above. These are they, who are resolved not to be saved by the Foolishness of Preaching. Yet it concerns them to take Notice, that *the preaching of the Cross is to them only that perish Foolishness (g).* and if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them (h). So that they, who despise the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, have no Reason to value themselves upon their superior Discernment; it being no other, than the most signal Folly of Wretches, fitted to Destruction. St. Paul, we find, when inspired by the Spirit of God himself, was in a quite opposite way of thinking: For he *determined not to know or to make known any thing among those to whom he preached the Gospel, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

AND

(g) 1 Cor. i. 18.

(h) 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

7

SERM.

I.

AND, having the Example of so great an Apostle before me, I judge it a sufficient Authority for undertaking--- *to entertain your Meditations with some of the most considerable Points which we ought to know concerning Christ Jesus,-----and to convince your Minds, that this is in all Respects the most excellent Knowledge.*

IN general *to know Christ* is to be well acquainted with that Religion, which he founded in all its Parts, and to have a clear Insight into those lively Oracles of Truth, in which the Whole of his Doctrine is contained: But more particularly it may signify a right Apprehension of those Branches of his Revelation, which immediately relate to himself, and are to be looked upon as such fundamental Articles of it, that it is in vain to pretend to the Knowledge of him, without heartily and fully acknowledging them. And to this restrained Sense shall I limit, what I beg Leave to lay before you on the Subject.

THAT there was such a Person as Jesus Christ, who lived in the Time, Country and Manner specified in the Scriptures, we must

8 S E R M O N S *on several*

SERM. be at least as certain of, as we can be of the

I. Existence of any Man whatsoever, whom we
 ~~~~~ have not seen with our own Eyes.

AND we must also be assured, by reading the Account of him recorded in the Gospel with Care and without Prejudice, That there never was, nor ever can be such another Person in the World. Since it is there expressly revealed of him, that he was not barely Man, but even God likewise; that he as really partook of the Divine Nature by being Son of God, as he did of the Human by being Son of Man, and-----that he thus became both God and Man united in one and the same Person. His Works declare him as powerfully to be God, as his Sufferings prove him sensibly to be Man; and unless we are satisfied, that he is God, we cannot believe him to be Jesus or a Saviour; nor unless we are satisfied, that he is Man, can we believe that his Merits extend unto us; neither unless we are satisfied, that he is both God and Man, can we believe him to be the Mediator between God and Man. Surely then so material a Point calls for the most serious Attention, and nothing can justify the treating that Doctrine either with Scorn, or with Indifference, upon  
 which

# IMPORTANT SUBJECTS. 9

which are grounded all our Hopes and Ex-  
 pectations; especially since it is maintained,  
 and has been abundantly proved by its Ad-  
 vocates to be a Truth so evidently revealed  
 (as far as so high a Mystery can be made  
 known unto us) in God's holy Word, that  
 none, but such as wilfully shut their Eyes or  
 harden their Hearts, can be either ignorant  
 or doubtful of it.

SERM.

I.

THE Proofs in support of this Article are  
 as weighty and numerous in the New Tes-  
 tament, as the Importance of it is great and  
 momentous in the Christian Dispensation.  
 But these have been so often and so indis-  
 putably established by the Labours of the  
 Learned; Difficulties have been so satisfacto-  
 rily cleared up, and Evasions so solidly re-  
 futed, that it were an Abuse of Time here  
 to offer at more, than to remind Men of a few  
 of those Texts of Scripture, without entering  
 into any critical Disquisitions about them, by  
 which this Doctrine is taught and supported.  
 And among them I shall confine myself to  
 such, as ascribe the Divine Titles, and the  
 incommunicable Attributes, Worship and Ope-  
 rations of God equally to the Son with the  
 Father. Thus, he is pronounced to be  
 God



10      SERMONS on several

SERM. God (i)----is stiled Lord God (k)----the true

I. God (l) -----and over all, God blessed for ever (m)----I am the first and the last, says he, (n)----Where two or three are gathered, there am I in the midst of them (o). and lo! I am with you always, even unto the End of the World (p)----Ye believe in God, believe also in me (q)----The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgement to the Son: that all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (r)----All things whatsoever the Father doth, those also doth the Son (s)----All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist (t)----Upholding all things by the Word of his Power (u).

WELL therefore might our Blessed Lord think it no Robbery to be equal with God (x). and assert, that all things that the Father hath are mine (y). and I and my Father are one (z). and if God justified him in these Claims, and declared him to be his

(i) St. John i. 1.

(k) St. Luke i. 16.

(l) 1 Ep. St. John v. 20.

(m) Rom. ix. 5.

(n) Rev. i. 17.

(o) St. Matth. xviii. 20.

(p) St. Matth. xxviii. 20.

(q) St. John xiv. 1.

(r) St. John v. 22, 23.

(s) St. John v. 19.

(t) Col. i. 16, 17.

(u) Heb. i. 3.

(x) Phil. ii. 6.

(y) St. John xvi. 15.

(z) x. 30.

*his Son with Power, according to the Spirit* SERM.  
*of Holiness, by the Resurrection from the* I.  
*Dead (a), shall any of his Creatures dare to*  
 question them?----For us to fall short of  
 this Scripture-account in our Professions or  
 our Sentiments of Christ our Saviour, is not  
 to own but to deny him;----it is to degrade  
 his personal Dignity,----to villify his sacred  
 Character, and----to blaspheme his Divinity.

NEXT to acknowledging Christ Jesus in  
 his Godhead, we must endeavour to know  
 him rightly in his Manhood; that, as he  
 was in the Beginning and existed from all  
 Eternity with the Father, so he was also in  
 the fullness of Time generated and born into  
 the World.

VARIOUS of old were the idle Conceits  
 concerning the Humanity of Christ; but  
 now it seems universally allowed, that he  
 had a Production agreeable to our Nature  
 and Species, becoming thereby truly and  
 properly a Man,----nay, so far is this men-  
 tioned by some, that through the Vanity of  
 their Minds they will admit him to be no-  
 thing more, nor grant, that he was begotten  
 after any other than the common Manner.;  
 though

(a) Rom. i. 4.

SERM. though the History of his Birth very positively asserts, that he was conceived and made Man by the Holy Ghost coming upon and the Power of the Highest overshadowing the Virgin *Mary* his Mother (*b*). To whom the Words of the Prophet may be most properly addressed : *Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Host is his Name* (*c*).

THIS wonderful Mystery of the Union of the Manhood with the Godhead in Jesus Christ is signified, and though the Manner of it be inexplicable, yet the Fact itself is manifestly declared to us by various Passages of Holy Scripture ; as, more obscurely, *The Day spring from an High, hath visited us* (*d*). and *We bear Witness and shew unto you, that eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us* (*e*)---and more expressly, *God was manifested in the Flesh* (*f*)---and *the Word was made Flesh* (*g*)---and *He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but he took on him the Seed of Abraham* (*h*)---and *was made of the Seed of David* (*i*)---Of whom, as concerning the *Flesh Christ came* (*k*).

FROM

(*b*) St. Luke i. 35.

(*c*) Isai. liv. 5.

(*d*) St. Luke i. 78.

(*e*) 1 St. John i. 2.

(*f*) 1 Tim. iii. 16.

(*g*) St. John i. 14.

(*h*) Heb. ii. 16.

(*i*) Rom. i. 3. (*k*) ix. 5.



FROM all which Testimonies of sacred Writ the Conclusion evidently is, That the same Divine Person, who before from all Eternity had subsisted in the Nature of God, did by a temporal Generation truly become Man, the Divine and Human Natures being united in him without any Confusion or Conversion, and thus vesting himself with full Powers for his Mediatorial Office.

Now this *Immanuel*, or *God with us*, as both the Prophet and the Apostle stile him, (1)----after his Incarnation and Birth grew in Wisdom and Stature, as is usual for Men to do, and led a private and retir'd Life, until the Time came for his shewing himself openly unto *Israel*, when he manifested forth his Glory by working such Miracles and doing so much Good, as required far more than a human Power and a bounded Generosity to perform.

To gain a right Conception of these Things is a necessary Part of every Christian's Duty, nor is it less our Interest to make ourselves sensible of, as well what our Lord has done for us, as what he is  
in

(1) *Isai. vii. 14.* St. *Matth. i. 23.*

SERM. in himself. But a full View of so engaging  
 I. a Prospect can be had only from the Scrip-  
 tures; and no more must be in this Place  
 looked for, than some general imperfect  
 Hints, leading to a more extensive Enquiry,  
 how stupendously great and good he shone  
 in all the publick Actions of his Life.

THE Account we find of this extraordinary Person, recorded by the four Evangelists, gives us to understand, that he made at Pleasure all Creatures, beside their Natures and against their Wills, to obey his Commands, and submit to the Voice of his Word. In a most furious Tempest, he mildly awaking out of Sleep, *arose and rebuked the Wind and the Sea, and there was a great Calm*, which induced his Disciples very justly to *marvel, saying, what manner of Man is this? For even the Winds and the Sea obey him* (m).----He cured Diseases, to human Skill incurable: He healed inveterate Palsies, Fluxes, and Leprosies: He gave at once the perfect Use of Senses wanting from the Birth, and to innumerable Persons blind, deaf, dumb, lame, the Exercise of their Faculties and Members respectively, without the Application of Medicines, or any natural Means.

(m) St. Matth. viii. 26, 27.

Means conducive to those Purposes.----He SERM.  
 recovered Lunatics to a right Mind, and I.  
 rescued Dæmoniacks from the Tyranny of  
 evil Spirits.----He discerned the Thoughts,  
 Reasonings, Opinions and Purposes of Men;  
 and, what is above all, by his inherent Om-  
 nipotence he raised the Dead: By which  
 divine Work Men might see and be assured,  
 that although he appeared among them only  
 as a Man, yet he was at the same Time  
 truly and essentially God.----He spake as the  
 Jews themselves confessed, as never Man  
 spake; and his Answers to the Questions  
 propounded to him were, as if a Man had  
 enquired of the Oracle of God.---He declared  
 most graciously, that the End of his being  
 made the Son of Man was to die for sinful  
 Men, and of his coming as such into the World  
 was not to condemn, but to save the World.---  
 He revealed many great Truths which had  
 before been hid in dark Obscurity, those  
 especially, which were necessary to the pu-  
 rifying Men's Hearts with a right Faith in  
 God.----He vindicated the Law, published  
 on Mount *Sinai*, from the false and immo-  
 ral Glosses, the Jewish Doctors had cor-  
 rupted it with.-----He taught Men their  
 whole Duty to God, their Neighbours, and  
 themselves, and enforced it by the most  
 awful



SERM. awful Sanctions of eternal Happiness and Mi-

I. sery, Rewards and Punishments, in his own

Power to dispense. *For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son (n). I have, says he the Keys of Hell and of Death (o). And the Hour is coming, in which all that are in their Graves shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done Good, to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil, to the Resurrection of Damnation (p).---*He has put it in every Man's Power to obtain the Good, and to escape the Evil Portion, by prescribing to us a very equitable Rule of Action; and he has shewed us likewise the Way to keep his Commandments by going before us in it, exemplifying his Precepts by his own Practice, and living in all Respects as he taught Mankind to live.---Besides, to obviate all Difficulties flowing from the Weakness of human Nature, he promised to support the best Endeavours of the Sincere with his Grace, and to take off the discouraging Terrors of Guilt, he engaged to atone for the Transgressions of the Penitent by his Merit.

THUS

(n) S. John v. 22. (o) Rev. i. 18.

(p) St. John v. 28, 29.

THUS have we with hasty Steps attended our Blessed Lord through his Life, and seen, how the only begotten Son of God, of one Substance with the Father, conversed with Men in their Likeness. They were great Things, it must be confessed, which we already observe to have been done for us; yet, if we rest here, we shall not have discovered the half of his Love; the most amazing Scene is still behind, and, if his Actions were beneficent, his Sufferings were meritorious. To those he freely offered himself; and, when he had taken all the previous Steps, he then of his own Accord permitted his Sacred Person to be apprehended, arraigned, condemned and crucified, as if he had been some notorious Malefactor.

AND, indeed, unless he had so died, he would not have answered the End of his being born. It was ultimately for this Cause he came into the World, that he might save the World,---might be substituted in the room of sinful Men, and be punished for them, in order to their being released from their personal Obligation to Punishment. And however impious Men may make this Doctrine the Subject of their prophane

SERM. Mirth, and reject the Counsel of God against  
 I. themselves, yet it concerns all, who would  
 entertain rational Hopes of Reconciliation  
 and Acceptance with him, so found them  
 wholly on the Sufficiency of Christ's Re-  
 demption; for which we have the fullest  
 Authority of divine Revelation, derived not  
 from single Passages, but the entire Scope  
 of holy Scripture. *I am the good Shepherd,*  
 says our dear Redeemer, *and I lay down my*  
*Life for my Sheep* (q). *Who*, as St. Paul  
 declares to Titus, *gave himself for us, that*  
*he might redeem us from all Iniquity* (r)----  
 both from the Punishment and the Tyranny  
 of it; *i. e.* he parted with his Life in ex-  
 change for ours---he laid it down for us,  
 as the Price of our Propitiation with God,  
 and poured forth his most precious Blood  
 for the Remission of Sins; and accordingly  
 he is described, and represented to have *given*  
*his Life a Ransom*, or Price of Redemp-  
 tion for many (s) *to have died for our Sins*  
*(t)---to have once suffered for our Sins, the*  
*Just for the Unjust* (u)---Expressions, which  
 evidently make it appear, that our Sins were  
 the Cause, and the Expiation of them the  
 End of Christ's sufferings and Death, and  
 very

(q) St. John x. 14, 15.

(r) Titus ii. 14.

(s) St. Mark x. 45.

(t) 1 Cor. xv. 3.

(u) 1 Pet. iii. 18.



very fully open to us the Reason of St. *SERM.*  
*Paul's* laying such a singular Stress on the I.  
 Knowledge of Christ crucified. ~~~~~

It is upon this Account, that he is said to *bear our Sins in his own Body on the Tree (x)*, i. e. to undergo the Punishment of them in those exquisite Torments, he endured upon the Cross;----and *to be made Sin for us (y)* as the expiatory Sacrifices among the Jews were made Sin, or made to undergo the Punishment of Sin for the Offenders who offered them;----and also *to be made a Curse for us (z)*, by having the Guilt of our Sins transferred on him, even as the legal Victims were cursed by the Translation of the People's Guilt upon them.

Thus, as it was foretold of him, *he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities: the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him; the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all (a)*----and those Things which God before had shewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, *he hath so fulfilled (b)*.

C 2

WHAT

(x) 1 St. Pet. ii. 24.

(z) Gal. iii. 13.

(b) Acts iii. 18.

(y) 2 Cor. v. 21.

(a) Mat. liii. 5, 6.

SERM.

I.

WHAT Sentiments then it behoves us to entertain of our Blessed Lord in this Respect are, that he voluntarily, and of his own Accord gave up the Ghost upon the Cross, and died in that Nature, which was capable of dying, offering it up, as a Sacrifice instead of all, who are of that Nature. Even human Reason can discover, if the Divine had not thought fit to make it an Article of Revelation, that, as Christ Jesus the eternal Son of God was holy and innocent in the most perfect Sense, he could not be obnoxious to Misery and Suffering, but by his own Act and Choice; because the Demerit of enduring natural Evil springs originally from the Guilt of doing moral Evil. It was a just Observation of the Psalmist, that *the Rod of the Ungodly cometh not into the Lot of the Righteous (c)*, and therefore, says Christ, *doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I might take it again; no Man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself (d)*.

AND as he had such Power, so the Use, he made of it, was for our Salvation: Quite unconcerned about his own Ease, he gladly yielded

(c) Pf. cxxv. 3.

(d) St. John x. 17, 18.

yielded to the Tortures of the Cross for the SERM.  
 Joy, that was set before him; the Joy! I.  
 which nothing less than boundless Goodness  
 could relish, of rescuing Multitudes of other-  
 wise lost Souls from endless Perdition. His  
 Love, as immense as his Nature, induced  
 him freely to lay down his Life for the  
 Redemption of Mankind, and to spill his  
 most precious Blood, as an Atonement for a  
 whole World of Sinners. Nor did the Ef-  
 fect fall short of his gracious Intentions;  
 for his single Death was equal to the Death  
 of all Men, or rather of inconceivably greater  
 Value and Merit; and if the whole Race of  
 Mankind had been left to perish everlasting-  
 ly, their Destruction could have been no  
 more, than that of so many humane, finite  
 Creatures, whereas Christ's was the Dissolu-  
 tion of a Person truly Divine, of whom it  
 may with great strictness of Expression be  
 affirmed, that his Enemies *crucified the Lord  
 of Glory, God manifest in the Flesh.*

THE Deity, it must be ever acknowledged,  
 was impassible in him: However being so  
 strictly united to his Humanity, as to con-  
 stitute but one Person, it added an un-  
 speakable Value to the Sufferings, he chose  
 to ungergo: Those Pains of Death from his



SERM inherent Dignity, and their own Intenfeness  
 I. became infinite in Degree, tho' short in Duration, and proved an ample Commutation for that eternity of Torments, to which Sinners had exposed themselves.

HENCE we are brought to know and understand, how to Wretches justly abandoned to the Gloominess of Despair, there arises the glorious Sun-shine of Hope; ----how an exorbitant Load of Guilt, which the Contractors would to endless Ages have in vain laboured to throw off, comes to be discharged at once by their Security; ----how God's deepest Hatred of Sin, and his overflowing Compassion towards Sinners are made consistent, ----and how the most heinous Transgressions of the Law are forgiven without derogating from the Legislator's Authority.

BUT remove this chief Corner-stone, and what a weak tottering Building must we raise on Supposition, that there was no Sacrifice, or an incompetent one made for Sin! all is dark, and confused in any Scheme of Religion, we can frame, ----the Divine Attributes clash with one another, --Wickedness is rather encouraged than suppressed, --the Restraint of God's sovereign Power instead

instead of being established, is weakened: --- SERM.  
And whoever sees not the Necessity, as well I.  
as the Blessing of an infinite Saviour, must  
be reduced to the Dilemma of allowing,  
either that God is angry with his offending  
Creatures without Cause, or is reconciled to  
them without Reason.

WE should therefore most firmly be per-  
suaded, that---as nothing short of such an  
inestimable Sacrifice, as the Death of Christ,  
could have compleated Man's Redemption,  
so neither could God's utter Abhorrence of  
all moral Turpitude be otherwise shewn, nor  
a sufficient Guard placed to the Authority of  
his providential Government,---past Trans-  
gressions would not be atoned for, nor fu-  
ture prevented. Had he forgiven Offenders  
without inflicting any Punishment for their  
Offences, what must have been the Event?  
Why, Iniquity would have been established,  
as it were, by a Law, and God's supreme  
Jurisdiction exposed to the Contempt of  
every bold and insolent Invader. Or had  
he demanded some Satisfaction for the daring  
Provocations, which were offered to him;  
the less he had been content with, the less  
Weight would have been secured to his  
Laws by it. To have admitted a small

SERM. Atonement for the greatest Offence must  
 I. have proved almost, as destructive to his  
 Authority, as to have exacted none at all; the punishing slightly for high Crimes being in a manner as pernicious to Government, as total Impunity. In order then for the Almighty to answer the Ends of his governing Justice over his fallen Creatures, we must confess it to be quite necessary, that he should not only require a Punishment for their wilful Disobedience, but also such a one as was proportionable to the heinous Aggravations of it.

AND such was the Death of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; in whom the most intimate Union of the Divine and human Natures both enabled him to suffer, and rendered his Passion a compleat Sin-Offering; it enhanced his temporary Sufferings into a full Equivalent for those endless Miseries, which we had deserved.

NAY, what is much more, it must from the Event be admitted, that his Atonement was so inconceivably valuable, as not only to countervail the Punishment due to our Sins, but even abundantly to over balance it: Since it has certainly merited for us God's  
 Favour

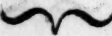


Favour, as well as his Pardon, a Title to SERM.  
Happiness, as well as a Release from Mi- I.  
fery.

WHAT it further concerns us to know in Relation to Christ Jesus the Saviour of the World, is, that the Divine Prophecies being fulfilled, and infinite Justice amply satisfied for the Transgressions of Mankind by the Death and Passion of God's only begotten Son in their Nature, and Stead, it was not possible for him to be detained long a Prisoner by the Powers of Darkness,---that he effectually subdued those spiritual Enemies, by seemingly yielding to them,---that he was to sleep in the Grave, but not long enough to see Corruption,---that as the Separation of his Soul and Body, so was likewise the re-union of them,---that he died as our Representative, but rose again as our Deliverer, thereby declaring himself mighty to save, confirming his highest Pretensions to the Messiahship, and an Unity of Essence with the Father, and giving us the utmost Assurance of his Sacrifice on the Cross being accepted, as it was offered for us,---and that, in full Proof of the Truth and Reality of his Resurrection, he continued upon Earth during the Space of forty Days afterwards,

to

SERM. to convince his Apostles by frequent Con-

I.  conversations, and all other reasonable Persons by their Testimony, that he was indeed risen, he having first qualified them in the best Manner for unquestionable Witnesses of this Fact,----in such a Manner, that they could neither be deceived themselves, nor deceive others.

THESE are Objects too affecting to be overlooked in the most superficial Survey of the Doctrine of Christ;----Points so honourable to our Redeemer and so beneficial to us, that to disregard them is to do manifest Injury both to him and ourselves. Nor can we apprehend Things aright, as the Truth is in Jesus, without considering him in his State, not only of Humiliation but Exaltation, without turning our Eyes from the most gloomy to the brightest Prospect, and beholding Mortality swallowed up of Life: In short, without following our great Forerunner from Earth to Heaven, whither he ascended in a visible and glorious Manner, after *he had given Commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen* (e)----where he was advanced to the highest Majesty and Honour, as Man, which he had  
ever

(e) Acts i. 2.

ever an indisputable Title to, as God, and SERM.  
 returning as it were in Triumph, on the I.  
 most signal Conquest and Defeat of Satan,  
 Sin, and Death, his and our Enemies, to  
 take Possession of his Kingdom, he sat  
 down on the Right Hand of God, on the  
 same Throne with the Father, to exercise  
 perpetually, in Conjunction with him, su-  
 preme Dominion over all, *Angels, and Au-*  
*thorities, and Powers being made subject unto*  
*him (f).* For God hath set him, as says  
 St. Paul, *at his own Right-hand in heavenly*  
*Places, far above all Principality and Power,*  
*and Might, and Dominion, and every Name*  
*that is named, not only in this World, but*  
*also in that which is to come. And hath put*  
*all Things in Subjection under his Feet, and*  
*gave him to be Head over all Things to the*  
*Church (g).* To the Church! which he has  
 purchased with his own Blood,---has con-  
 stituted to be his mystical Body, that he  
 may govern and dispose of it according  
 to his most righteous Will, and order all  
 Things relating thereto, so as nothing shall  
 ever destroy it, or hinder the Salvation of  
 any of its sound and living Members, *nor*  
*any Creature besides themselves be able to*  
*separate them from the Love of God which*  
 is

(f) 1 Pet. iii. 22.

(g) Ephes. i. 21, 22.



SERM. *is in Christ Jesus our Lord (b).* But that,  
 I. *in Virtue of his Regal Decree, Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting Life (i).*

SUCH an excellent and all-powerful Redeemer have we residing continually in the Presence of God, who for us *is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them (k).* This is his great Employment in those Seats of infinite Bliss and Glory, which *are appointed to receive him, until the Times of Restitution of all things, (l)* and thus he perfects Above, what he had transacted Below.

We are to consider Christ Jesus, not only as crucified, but as also glorified, and that both for our Sakes and his own. He, who was our Sacrifice upon Earth, is our Mediator in Heaven; he is the High Priest of our Profession, who, having made the Atonement by his precious Blood-shedding, is entered into the holy Place to plead the Efficacy of it before his Almighty Father; there to present the Merits of his Sufferings, and plead for ever their Value on our Behalf.

(b) Rom. viii. 39.

(i) St. John iii. 16.

(k) Heb. vii. 25.

(l) Acts iii. 21.

Behalf. Through his Interposition we have SERM.  
 Access to the Father, and enjoy the sancti- I.  
 fying Influences of the Spirit: And under  
 the Umbrage of so potent an Advocate, we,  
 who were afar off, are brought nigh, and  
 become reconciled to God,---have our Sins  
 pardoned,---our Services accepted,---our Wants  
 supplied,---our Prayers heard,---our Souls en-  
 riched with large Portions of Grace, and  
 both our Bodies and Souls sealed unto fu-  
 ture Glory.

THUS, as our Divine Lord loved his own  
 in the most extensive Degree, so he continues  
 to love them unto the End; when *he shall*  
*come again in like manner as he was seen*  
*to go into Heaven, (m)---shall descend from*  
*Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the*  
*Archangel, and with the Trump of God (n).*  
*Then shall he sit on the Throne of his Glory,*  
*and before him shall be gathered all Na-*  
*tions (o) on whom he is appointed to sit in*  
 Judgment, and pass a most just Sentence,  
 that every one may receive the Things done  
 in his Body, according to that he hath done,  
 whether it be Good or Bad (p).

THIS

(m) Acts i. 11.

(n) 1 Thess. iv. 16.

(o) St. Matth. xxv. 31, 32.

(p) 2 Cor. v. 10.

SERM.

I.

THIS will be the last solemn Act of the Son of God in the Quality of Messiah;--- his Mediation being now brought to its final Issue, it will of Course expire; Christ's Kingdom, as it stands distinguished from the universal absolute Government of the Deity over all his Creatures, will be delivered up; and God be all in all, henceforth even for evermore.

THESE, which I have here thrown together, are some of the many great Truths concerning Jesus Christ; to the Knowledge whereof I have judged it not improper to stir up your pure Minds by Way of Remembrance: But so far from fully explaining, that I have only touched very briefly upon them; nor have I so much aimed at leaving with you a perfect Measure of Christian Instruction, as at exciting in you, by this summary View, a noble Ardour of searching more diligently into the lively Oracles of God, and prevailing on you to give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine.

BE persuaded, that the Holy Scriptures piously studied, and soberly interpreted, are the only certain and most inestimable Funds of



of religious Knowledge. What is derived SERM.  
 from any other Fountain, or from that im- I.  
 prudently or designedly corrupted, is no ~  
 better than Ignorance: It deserves no Com-  
 mendation, when it is either not rightly  
 grounded, or not duly tempered: And to  
 affect a Wisdom above or besides what is  
 written, is a Conduct, in God's Account,  
 favouring of the most flagrant Folly: Much  
 less would I recommend, as of any Value, what  
 is even worse than Ignorance and Folly; I  
 mean such an Understanding of the Things  
 of our Lord, however well regulated, which  
 serves but for Amusement, and rests in empty  
 Speculation. Practice is the Life of Know-  
 ledge; and in vain does Truth irradiate the  
 Mind, if it does not shine forth in the outward  
 Action. It is this, which the Apostle speaks of,  
 and accounts so very excellent;----it is this,  
 which sinks deep into the Heart, as well as  
 the Head, moves the Affections, and prompts  
 us to live in all Respects according to  
 what we believe and know:---It is this,  
 which experimentally teaches us, that Christ  
 assumed our human Nature, by our par-  
 taking of his divine; that he died for our  
 Sins by our living unto Righteousness;---that  
 he is exalted above all Things in Heaven by  
 our preferring him before all Things on Earth.

THEY,

SERM.

I.

THEY who have acquired such a Knowledge of Christ, will not need many Arguments to convince them of the Excellency of it; and even they, who have not experienced it in their Minds, may yet perhaps be convinced too by God's Grace on their Attention, to what I have further to offer.

THE Excellency of this Knowledge then may appear in a good Measure from the Height and Sublimity of the Objects, upon which it is exercised. For whereas all our other Studies and Applications lie low, and are perplexed and entangled among the Creatures, this soars aloft upon the Creator and those divine Perfections of his, which he manifested in the Redemption of Mankind according to the Gospel. By knowing Jesus Christ we become acquainted with the Son of God, *by whom all Things were made, and without whom there was not any Thing made that was made* (q), and by knowing the Son, we are brought to entertain right Notions of the Father also; since *No Man knoweth who the Father is, but the Son, and he, to whom the Son will reveal him* (r). By this Knowledge of Jesus Christ we learn, how

(q) St. John i. 3.

(r) St. Luke x. 22.

how Grace and Truth came into the World, SERM.  
 and how the great Parent of the Universe I.  
 comes to be more propitious to fallen Man,  
 than to the fallen Angels, though both his  
 Creatures: *Christ never took on him the Nature*  
*of Angels (s)*,---he never died for them;  
 because, it may be, they offended more  
 wilfully and maliciously, consequently, there  
 being no Propitiation made for their Of-  
 fences, no Place of Repentance allowed to  
 them, they are reserved in everlasting Chains  
 under Darknefs, unto the Judgment of the great  
 Day (t). But Man, being first beguiled by  
 the Tempter, the Head of the Apostacy from  
 God, was treated by his Maker as an Ob-  
 ject of his Pity, rather than of his Venge-  
 ance.---From the same Fountain of revealed  
 Truth we likewise derive the most comfort-  
 able Discovery, that all the Losses, we sus-  
 tained in the first Adam, are more than re-  
 paired in Christ, the second :---We perceive,  
 how that, *as by one Man's Disobedience*  
*many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience*  
*of One many are made Righteous (u)*.---We  
 learn, how the good Works, which we sin-  
 cerely perform, come to be acceptable to  
 Heaven, notwithstanding their manifold Im-  
 D perfections,

(s) Heb. ii. 16.

(t) St. Jude, 6.

(u) Rom. v. 19.



SERMON. perfections, and how two Parties, at such an  
 I infinite Distance as God and Man, are, in a  
 Way quite agreeable to the Nature of both,  
 restored to perfect Peace and Amity with  
 each other.

AND though this be so high and won-  
 derful, it is still the most certain Know-  
 ledge we can possibly attain to. In all other  
 Cases we have little better than Conjecture  
 to build upon. For must we not depend  
 on either rational Deduction, or sensible In-  
 formation, or mere human Testimony? But  
 as for our Reason, is it not often apt to  
 conclude Wrong? Are not our Senses liable  
 to deceive us? And are not Men not only  
 fallible, but fallacious? They frequently add  
 to their Ignorance Fraud, and impose on  
 one another sometimes inadvertently, yet  
 oftner designedly.

WHEREAS the Knowledge we have of  
 Christ, is ascertained to us from the infal-  
 lible Declaration of God himself; who, by  
 his Prophets and Apostles, vested with full  
 Powers for Proof of their Commission, has  
 revealed whatever is necessary for us to be  
 informed of concerning his Nature, his Of-  
 fices, and his Relation to us: And sooner  
 shall

shall the Foundations of the Earth be out of Course, than that the Word of God shall cease to be the Word of Truth. I.

As we cannot question the Veracity of the Deity without disputing his very Existence, we must be as absolutely sure of all Matters written under the Direction of his Holy Spirit, as of Things most evident; what we clearly perceive after Search sincerely made into the sacred Oracles, to be there affirmed unconditionally and unexceptionably, we may and must rely entirely on the Certainty of it; nor can it be thought a Reflection on our Understanding to embrace any Article of Divine Revelation, solely on the Authority of the Revealer, without our seeing into the Ground and Reason of it, which may in some Points be impossible, in others improper: But it is the strongest Argument of an impious Distrust to reject it.

BESIDES, as this Knowledge of Christ Jesus is altogether certain, so is it exceedingly beneficial.

It must, indeed be allowed, that no human good Literature is without its Use and Advantage either to private Persons or publick Societies; and what is more, where it is

SERM. not spoiled by Vanity or a Fondness of be-

I. ing wife above what is written, it is very serviceable also for the right understanding of the holy Scriptures themselves, and so tends to even the Knowledge of Christ.

ALL solid Learning, of what Kind soever helps in its Proportion to raise, refine, and enlarge our Minds, and to render us more capable of attending to spiritual Objects. However, let it be esteemed never so highly at present, unless it leads us on from temporal to eternal Concerns, it will stand us in no Stead at last. For what if we were skilled in all Arts, Sciences and Languages, and could manage them to the most beneficial Purposes? What, if we could argue with all the Skill and Sophistry that ever Men did? What, if we could dive into the abstrusest Secrets of Nature, and see into the Springs and Movements of all second Causes? Yet, without Christ, we should be but undone for ever: There is no other Way to be rescued from everlasting Death, than by him; the whole of our Deliverance from first to last is begun, continued, and finished in him; neither can we take one right, secure Step towards Heaven, whilst we are ignorant of him and of his heavenly Doctrine.

BUT



BUT that our Knowledge of Christ may have Salvation for its End, it must have Sanctification for its Means: It is by the Way of Holiness, that it conducts us to Happiness: And that we may be able both to see and to practise the Things which make for our Peace, the Gospel sets forth to us the most perfect Rules, illustrates them by the most consummate Example, and promotes their Observance by the most powerful Supports. So that St. Peter had abundant Reason to suppose, that *it is through the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Men escape, or have the Power to escape, the Pollutions of the World (x),* since by it we are instructed how to mortify our corrupt Affections, so as to walk in newness of Life,---how to resist the Devil, so as to make him flee from us,---how to continue steadfast in the Faith, so as to make our Calling and Election sure.

LASTLY, To have a full View of the Excellency of this Knowledge, to its Usefulness let us add the Delightfulness of it. How insipid soever it may be reckoned by the Profane and Sensual, yet to the Spiritually-  
D 3 minded,

SERM minded, who have tasted thereof, it is found

I. so sweet, that they cannot relish any other  
 Entertainments like it. They long more  
 and more for it, and think, they have  
 never enough. As the Hart panteth after  
 the Water-brooks, so thirsteth their Mind  
 after this Divine Fountain of Truth and  
 Purity.

NUMEROUS are the Researches into Na-  
 ture and Art, with which we may please  
 our Imaginations, but this alone into the  
 Mystery of Godliness can delight and satisfy  
 our Souls. For whatever else we may know  
 or be ignorant of, we must be sensible,  
 that we are Sinners; and if such, then liable  
 to the Wrath of Almighty God, and to all  
 the Curses and Judgments, he has threat-  
 ened against Sinners: The serious Thoughts  
 whereof must make the stoutest Hearts to  
 tremble, in spite of all their Resolution, and  
 in the Midst of all their Self-sufficiency.

And where shall we look for Comfort  
 and Support under the Frowns of an angry  
 God? We may hunt for it far and wide  
 among the Creatures; but shall never find  
 it, save in Jesus Christ, and him crucified.  
 On no other Ground can we warrantably  
 build

build our Hope of Pardon, and Acceptance, SERM. and eternal Life. And they, who do, when II. they reflect upon themselves, upon their great Demerit, and upon what a precarious Footing they rest, by presuming on God's Mercy to the Prejudice of his Holiness, Wisdom, and Justice, must be scar'd with the frightful Apprehensions of that Judgment and fiery Indignation, which will at last devour them.

It is, as St. Paul expresses it (y) *in the Face of Jesus Christ*, whose Person is the exact Image of the Divine Essence, and Doctrine the perfect Rescript of the Divine Will, that we attain to the Knowledge of the Glory of God manifested in the Salvation of Man. And to discern, that he was delivered for our Offences, and is our Advocate with the Father, appearing continually in the Presence of God on our Behalf,--on the Behalf of all true believing Penitents, must fill our Hearts with the most substantial Joy,--Joy! which no Man can take from us,--which let us not deprive ourselves of by any Corruption of Mind or Manners,--and which, let us pray God to communicate to the whole World, by filling it with the Knowledge

D 4



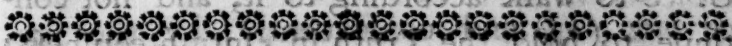
SERM. Knowledge of his Son, as the Waters cover

I. the Sea; always concluding with this Petition for ourselves, That as he has blessed us with the Enjoyment of the Gospel, in its primitive Purity, beyond most other Nations upon Earth, so he would give us Grace to walk according to it, and not continue to hold the Truth in Unrighteousness; lest our Candlestick be removed from us, and our Light be either obscured by Error, or eclipsed by Popery, or extinguished by Infidelity.



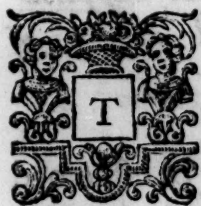


## S E R M O N II.



1 Tim. ii. 6.

*Who gave himself a Ransom for  
all, to be testified in due Time.*



THE principal Object, St. Paul SERM. II.

seems to have had in View from his composing this Epistle under the Guidance of the Holy Ghost, was to direct *Timothy*,

his Son, in the Faith, how he might worthily discharge his Episcopal Function, and to engage him to the Observance of Fidelity, and Prudence in the Exercise of that Authority, he was vested with.

IN order to obtain this End, the Apostle having in the first Chapter reminded the Pastor, on what Account he besought him to abide at *Ephesus*, when he himself went into *Macedonia*; which was, that he might  
oppose

SERM. oppose all false Teachers, and be very vigilant to prevent the Propagation of any other Doctrine (a) but what was agreeable to the Truth of the Gospel; and having put them in Remembrance likewise, that this Charge was committed unto him according to the Prophecies, which went before on him (b), and consequently, by the special Direction of the unerring Spirit of God, he proceeds in this second Chapter, by Virtue of his Apostolical Jurisdiction, to lay down Rules and Orders concerning the publick Service of the Church, giving the holy Man to understand, that it ought to consist of *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, to be made for all Men* (c).

THE Motive of Charity might be esteemed cogent enough of itself to determine Christians to extend their Devotions in Behalf of Mankind in general: But St. Paul assigns another very particular Reason here for his Injunction, which is, that *God our Saviour will have all Men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth* (d). He has a gracious Disposition toward the whole human Race, as being the common Father and

(a) 1 Tim. i. 10.

(b) V. 18.

(c) 1 Tim. ii. 1.

(d) V. 4. x. do H (a)



and Lord of all; therefore the Inference is, SERM.  
if he hath so loved them, they ought also to II.  
love one another, and to testify their mutual  
Love by an affectionate Recommendation of  
each other to his Divine Favour. *For there*  
*is one, and but one, God, both of Jews and*  
*Gentiles, of Believers and Unbelievers, and*  
*one Mediator between God and Men, the*  
*Man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a Ran-*  
*som for all, to be testified in due Time (e).*

THIS Act of God's infinite Mercy and  
Goodness, the Redemption of Sinners, and  
making all the Families of the Earth blef-  
fed, which had a Curse intituled upon them,  
was foretold, though with much Obscurity,  
by the ancient Prophets, at fundry Times,  
and in divers Manners, before and under  
the Law; but it has been most clearly  
brought to Light and fully attested by his Son  
under the Gospel: Who was the Lamb, in  
the Divine Intention and Foreknowledge,  
slain from the Foundation of the World (f).  
Who appeared upon Earth, and had a Body  
prepared for him, on purpose that he might  
suffer (g).

WHY

(e) 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

(f) Rev. xiii. 8.

(g) Heb. x. 45.

SERM.

II

WHY he appeared not sooner in his Person, is a Question which must be answered in the same Manner, as why he has not yet appeared to all Men in his Revelation? And can be resolved only into God's all-wise Will and Pleasure. Those, who lived before the coming of Jesus Christ in the Flesh, or who have never heard of him, or of his Doctrine since, must stand or fall to their own Master, and are not to be judged of us, or of Man's Judgment: And instead of disputing about the Salvation of others, it concerns us to make sure of our own.

THE first Advance, and Ground-step towards securing whereof, is, as our Apostle has informed us, *the coming to the Knowledge of the Truth*: And for that Reason we find him in his Writings, preferring the Knowledge of Christ incomparably beyond all other Science; its superiour Excellency and high Importance prevailed on him to set light by all other, that he might the more perfectly gain this: And as he valued it so dearly in general, so he set a distinguished Mark of his Esteem on the Knowledge of Christ crucified; he makes it the chief

Article

Article of our Religion, having told the **SERM.**  
*Corinthians (b)*, that he delivered it unto  
 them first of all, laid it as the grand Cor-  
 ner-stone of their spiritual Building, how  
 that Christ died for our Sins, according to  
 the Scriptures. For in Case he did not  
 truly die for us, we must be yet in our  
 Sins, they cannot but remain unatoned for,  
 and the dreadful Vengeance of an angry  
 God still hangs over us.

If then, so very much depends upon the  
 Death of Christ, it must be of great Moment  
 to us to acquire right Apprehensions of it.  
 The Fact, indeed, is not contested, and is, per-  
 haps, the only one in his whole Revelation,  
 which is now acknowledged on all Hands.  
 Had his Disciples ever strove to conceal it,  
 his Enemies would have proclaimed it;  
 the bitterest of them have in all Ages tri-  
 umphed on this Head, boasting, that all his  
 Projects were hereby blasted, and impiously  
 denying, that he rose again the third Day,  
 according to the same Scriptures, which de-  
 clare his Death (i).

WHAT no Person disputes, it were Labour  
 thrown away to undertake the formal Proof

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 3.

(i) V. 4.



SERM. of : That Christ Jesus yielded up the Ghost

II.

on the Cross, is an Event, which may fairly be taken for granted. But the End and the Effect of so extraordinary a Transaction are both of them variously represented. Some attribute too much to it, and some too little,--those magnify the Merit of it to a Degree inconsistent even with the Divine Attributes, and these will not allow it to have any proper Merit at all, or at least not a Sufficiency of Meritoriousness to become a Ransom for the Sins of the whole World: And there are others likewise, who overstrain it as much on one Side, as they contract it on the other; and whilst they profess and contend, that our Saviour died for a few unconditionally, deny that he did so on any Terms for all.

THOUGH then the Doctrine of Christ's Satisfaction has been before touched upon in the preceding Discourse, I may yet be permitted the Liberty of giving it a particular and separate Consideration; as it has met with the most vehement Opposition, and been attacked either in the Whole, or in Part, from all Quarters. But, I conceive, the Doctrine will be established on a very solid Basis, by shewing *the Ransom of our Saviour to be altogether necessary, sufficient, universal.*

St.

ST. Paul represents the Deliverance wrought by the Son of God under the Notion of a Ransom; which signifies either a Price paid down to a conqueror for the Redemption of a Captive, or a valuable Consideration advanced to a Creditor for the Release of a Debtor, or a Satisfaction made to Justice for the Pardon of a Criminal. In all these Views Christ Jesus may be truly said to have given himself a Ransom for Mankind; who are to be regarded as Captives, Debtors, and Criminals: And he released them from Captivity, by becoming their Hostage, and yielding in one Nature to the Power of the Enemy, which he vanquished in another,---he discharged their Debt, by acting as their Security,---he obtained their Pardon by suffering as their Substitute.

THAT Man is a Slave to Sin, and by Means thereof a Debtor and a Criminal in God's Account, is a certain, though a mortifying Truth. Every Sinner has evidently lost the Government of himself;---his Reason is subverted, his Judgment is over-ruled, his superior Faculties are degraded, and the inferior ones have shamefully usurped their Seat, so that his blind Appetites and Passions, which

SERM. which were formed for Obedience, domineer, and each acts the Tyrant in his Turn, sometimes one of them, sometimes another taking him a Prisoner at their Will. Hence are incurred immense Debts, above the human Ability to pay off, and are committed Crimes, which everlasting Destruction will hardly compensate for.

II.

AND where was the Man ever to be found (him excepted, who was infinitely more than Man) that stood clear of this most deplorable State? Our whole Species groans under the heavy Thralldom together: There is a vicious Byass to Iniquity ingrafted in our very Being,---it is born and grows up with us, and in numerous Instances causes us to offend; nor is it in the Power of Nature always to withstand its Force. From this Spring have constantly issued the most impure Streams; and no otherwise can a satisfactory Reason be given, why *Moses* declared, that before the Flood *all Flesh had corrupted his Way upon the Earth* (k),-----why under the Law holy *David* complained, that *the Children of Men were all gone aside, were altogether become filthy, there was none that did Good, no*

(k) Gen. vi. 12.



SERM. which were formed for Obedience, domi-  
 II. neer, and each acts the Tyrant in his Turn,  
 sometimes one of them, sometimes another  
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 Power of Nature always to withstand its  
 Force. From this Spring have constantly  
 issued the most impure Streams; and no  
 otherwise can a satisfactory Reason be given,  
 why *Moses* declared, that before the Flood  
*all Flesh had corrupted his Way upon the*  
*Earth* (k),-----why under the Law holy  
*David* complained, that *the Children of Men*  
*were all gone aside, were altogether become*  
*filthy, there was none that did Good, no*

not

(k) Gen. vi. 12.

*not one (l),---why under the Gospel one* SERM.  
 Apostle asserts, that *in me, that is, in my* II.  
*Flesh, dwelleth no good Thing (m), and ano-*  
 ther, that *if we say that we have not sinned,*  
*we make God a Liar, and his Word is not*  
*in us (n).*

FOR any one to deny, or doubt of the Foundation of these Testimonies, is as weighty an Argument, as can be produced, to prove the Reality of his wretched Bondage to Corruption; it being the same Cause, which perverts the Will, and darkens the Understanding: And it is so far from being a Symptom of Health, when a Person is not sensible of his Malady, that he is in the most imminent Danger, who is sick to the Degree of not knowing it. Yet how strenuously do some Men plead for the Soundness of their natural Knowledge and Power, and maintain, that they can of themselves judge rightly and choose wisely in all Things pertaining to Happiness and Salvation.

BUT here seems to be the Fallacy of their Reasonings on this Topic, that they blend and confound two very distinct Conceptions  
 E of

(l) Ps. xiv. 2, 3.

(m) Rom. vii. 18.

(n) 1 St. John i. 10.

SERM. of human Nature, and affirm that of it in  
 II. one, which is true only in the other. That  
 it is agreeable to our rational Constitution  
 to discern and pursue the Duties of Piety,  
 Justice, Charity, Sobriety, and all Righteous-  
 ness, cannot indeed be questioned, without  
 questioning at the same Time the essential  
 Difference between Virtue and Vice, and the  
 moral Agency of Man. However, that it is  
 also agreeable to our depraved Nature to re-  
 bel against our Creator,---to delight in In-  
 justice and Oppression, and making our Fel-  
 low-Creatures wretched,---and to be enslaved  
 by many furious and headstrong Appetites,  
 cannot be more truly disputed, without con-  
 tradicting our own Feeling and Observa-  
 tion, and the Attestation of God himself.

As there was a primitive Integrity in  
 Man, the Origin of true Liberty, which he  
 might have preserved inviolate, so is there  
 most surely a derived Principle of Defile-  
 ment fixed within him, which he can no  
 more subdue, than vindicate. This is that  
 Law in our Members, by which Sin rules  
 in our Hearts with an Influence superior  
 to the Law of God. It displays itself in  
 its full Vigour without Grace, and struggles  
 for the Ascendant under it. It is most  
 opposite



opposite to the infinite Purity of the Supreme Being, and makes the human Nature hateful to the Divine, as it is debauch'd thereby in its inmost Composition,---is carried off in a full Career towards Transgression,---and lain often under the Necessity of offending; which, though not of that Sort, whereby the material or brutal World is forced to act, is yet such, as was never known to fail in any Instance, but of him, who was the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man,---who came into the World on purpose to ransom us from the all-commanding Power of Sin,---to restore us to our lost Capacity of Obedience, and to atone for the Defects of it in the Penitent and Reformed.

SHOULD we, concealing our Disease, reject the offered Remedy, and doubt of this ultimate End of Christ's taking our Nature upon him, we must be utterly unworthy of the beneficial Effects of it. To entertain a Notion, that there is no Need of a Redeemer---shews a Mind unhappily blinded by Error, and is a remarkable Production of that original Taint, which Men are so very backward to acknowledge. It aims at overturning Foundations, and indisputably takes its Rise from a Denial of the most funda-

SERM. mental Article of the Christian Faith. For

II. if they, who are in this way of Thinking, would modestly attribute to their Saviour that Perfection, which he certainly enjoys, they would not be tempted to arrogate to themselves that Perfection, which they notoriously want.

It being then but too manifest, that Man is subject to the uncontrollable Dominion of Sin, and reduced to great Viciousness of Soul, as well as Wretchedness of Body; let us trace up the Evil to the Spring-head, and we shall find it deriving its Source as high up almost as his very Existence,---let us search for the Occasion of the Ransom, we stand in the utmost Need of, and we must look for it as far back, as the Disobedience of our first-formed Parents, and for the Intention to grant it a vast deal further; since, known unto God are all his Works, and all his Purposes, even from Eternity.

THEY, who cannot persuade themselves to relish the Scripture Account of that most enormous Offence, which has entailed Impurity and Misery on the whole Race of *Adam*, should re-examine what Grounds they have  
for

for their Dislike ; and why they conclude the Relation to be void of Truth, and all no better than mere Allegory and Fable. Cannot a real Occurrence be described in figurative Expressions ? Or, is the History not to be credited, because it is concise, because it does not gratify their Curiosity in all its Circumstances, though it plainly asserts the Fact, it treats of ? Such incredulous Persons should consider, that the whole Plan of Revelation is founded upon this Event ;---it is alluded to in every Part of the Old Testament, and is the Master-key to open the Drift and Meaning of the most stupendous Incidents in the New.

SERM.

II.

If Christ Jesus suffered in the Manner and Measure, we are assured, he did, there must be some very substantial Cause for it. It could not be for his own Demerit, as he had not the least Shadow of Guilt ; *who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth* (o) or if wicked Men could be moved by Envy and Malice to destroy the most righteous and benificent Person, that ever lived, how came they to be able to perpetrate their Villainy ? His Innocence exempted him from suffering justly, and his Omnipotence defended him from being punished wrongfully, without

E 3

his

(o) 1 St. Pet. ii. 22.



SERM his own voluntary Consent. He declares, that  
 II. *he had Power to lay down his Life and to*  
 ~~~~~ *take it again (p).* But that his Enemies  
 had none over him, *except it were given*
them from above (q), and he could on Ap-
 plication to his heavenly Father obtain a
 numerous angelic Host for his Rescue and
 Defence (r). Yet he declined this Exertion
 of his Divine Authority, and of his own
 Accord calmly submitted himself to Infamy,
 to Torture, and to Death.

Now what could be the Inducement to
 all this? What Motive suitable to such ama-
 zing Humiliation can be thought of, if the
 Necessities of lost Man did not loudly call
 for this Display of infinitely condescending
 Goodness, in order to his Recovery? The
 Greatness of the Ransom should be an ir-
 refragable Proof to us, that the Captivity
 was heavy and real,---the Value of the
 Atonement a most powerful Evidence of
 the extreme Guilt; nor can there be so base
 and monstrous an Instance of Ingratitude, as
 to disown our having been by Nature in a
 State of Misery and Slavery, rather than
 confess the Payment of the Price of our
 Redemption.

BUT

(p) St. John x. 18.

(q) St. John xix. 11.

(r) St. Matth. xxvi. 53.

BUT how do the Oppugners of Christ's Satisfaction hit off the Difficulty? That Mankind are, and always, from the first Transgression, have been universally affected with a spiritual Depravity, incapable of acting up to their Maker's Expectations, and all more or less reduced under the Tyranny of Sin, so as to obey it in the Lusts thereof, is manifest above reasonable Dispute. And who can work Deliverance for them, besides the Son of God? What can discharge their Obligation, but his Merits? And what wash them clean except his most precious Blood? Instead of this, what have these Men to trust to? It must be either to Sacrifices, as did the Antients, or to Repentance, as do the Moderns, who warmly contend for its being a full Plea for Pardon.

IN REGARD to the former, it has been long ago allowed, that St. *Paul* was at least once in the right, when he pronounced it to be *impossible, that the Blood of Bulls or of Goats should take away* the Guilt, or the Punishment of Sin (*s*). And it was the deepest Ignorance of the End, for which Sacrifices were ordained, that induced weak Men to

E 4

imagine

(*s*) Heb. x. 4.

SERM. imagine, these were able by their proper
 II. Virtue and Efficacy to expiate the Faults of
 ~~~~~ the Offerers.

As there appears to be no Room to suppose, that it could be the Invention of Men to take away the Lives of Beasts, and employ them as Victims in the Worship of God, without his express Appointment; so is there as little to question, that they were instituted for some good and useful Purpose. But this was rather to discover, than pay off the Debt; to shew Men, how they had justly forfeited their Lives by their Wickedness, rather than redeem them by the Death of their Sacrifices,---and to point to the Atonement and its Manner of operating, rather than make it. Being therefore considered independently of their typical Relation to Christ's Satisfaction on the Cross, they could be of no spiritual Benefit, *nor make the Comers thereunto perfect (t).*

INSTRUCTIVE Lessons, to be sure, they were to the common Apprehension of Mankind in all Ages, that God would not be appeased, nor forgive them without Punishment; and to the Jews particularly they were

(t) Heb. x. 1,



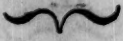
were Forms of entering into, and renewing SERM.  
 their Covenant with their Maker, whereby II.  
 he vouchsafed to bind himself, on certain  
 Conditions, to Pardon, to be reconciled  
 to, and bestow various Blessings on them.  
 After all, they were not in their own Nature  
 effectual to these great Purposes,-----they  
 had no intrinsic Excellency in them towards  
 procuring the Divine Favour,---and derived  
 their whole Worth from being made the  
 Representation of that real Sacrifice, which  
 was to be, and has been the Propitiation for  
 the Sins of the World.

BUT though the material lifeless Sacrifices  
 of Brutes could not, yet why may not the  
 reasonable and living Sacrifice of ourselves,  
 by an hearty Repentance and renewed Obe-  
 dience, be available to pacify God's Wrath,  
 to satisfy his Justice, and to prevent our Pu-  
 nishment? No Doubt, it may; provided Sinners  
 do not build more on this Foundation, than it  
 will bear. To forsake Ungodliness is expe-  
 dient, and even necessary to the Forgiveness of  
 it; and to improve in Holiness is the best  
 Qualification for a gracious Acceptance:  
 Yet to recommend an Offender to Mercy is  
 one thing, and to give him a firm Claim  
 to it is another. To expect, as of Right,  
 a Release

SERM. a Release of past Demands on the Score of  
 II. future Services, no less due in themselves  
 ~~~~~ than those, which have been withheld, is much  
 the same thing with attempting to pay one
 Debt with the Tender of another.

The most uniform Submission to the Divine Will, after numerous Offences committed, cannot properly make Reparation for them : It can only induce the Criminal to entertain some faint Hopes of Pardon, but not in Point of strict Justice authorize him to look on himself as actually, or sure to be, forgiven. For since God has the same Title to the Homage of his Creatures in every Part of their Lives, what was their Duty before their Disobedience, must be equally so assert it ; and consequently, a pious Change of Mind and Manners in a subsequent Period of their Being, cannot atone for their Impieties in a past,---have not the Efficacy to wipe away the Stains of Vice, nor to restore Sinners to the same Place in God's Love and Regard, which they might enjoy before.

HE, who is once an Offender, must be always one, how pertinent soever ;---Sin leaves an indelible Mark on the guilty Mind ;---lost Innocence cannot be recalled :
 And

And if the justly provoked Deity is pleased SERM.
to overlook our Iniquities so far, as instead II.
of inflicting the Vengeance they deserve, 
to treat us like pure and sinless Persons,
when we are too much the reverse, this
Privilege must arise not from what we have
been able to advance towards the Purchase
of it for ourselves, but from the ample
Price paid down by Christ Jesus for us:
So that our whole Dependance rests on a
crucified Saviour.

HENCE questionless it is, that the Holy
Scriptures have lain such Weight on the
Sufferings and Death of Christ, and set them
off with the utmost Strength and Variety
of Expression; that whoever believes those,
as he ought, cannot disbelieve these. The
Knowledge thereof was gradually introduced
into the World by a Series of Prophecies,
which, however dark in the Delivery, be-
came exceeding clear in the Completion;
nor have we, who live so many Ages after
the Accomplishment, the least Reason to
hesitate concerning their ultimate Sense and
Meaning: For if we are persuaded, that the
same infallible Spirit is the Revealer of the
Purposes of God in both Testaments, his
Applications in the New of prophetic Pas-
sages

60 SERMONS *on several*

SERM. fages in the Old must be necessarily received
II. as the only certain Interpretation of them.

WHAT was promised to *Adam*, to *Abraham*, to *David*, to the People of *Israel*, and to all Mankind in general, we see all fulfilled in him, on whom we have believed, and to whom all the antient descriptive Marks of the Messiah do manifestly agree in so compleat a Manner, that, all Circumstances being considered, it is impossible there should be any such, if our Lord be not the Person. What was typified by *Moses*, has been verified in Christ; and he is properly the End of all God's Engagements to the Jews, and the Sum of all their Hopes to the Gentiles. The offering up of the Son of *Abraham* in Intention prefigured the Sacrifice of the Son of the Highest in Reality. He was *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World* (u), and *the Passover sacrificed for us* (x). All the Predictions of the Prophets relating to the Sufferings of their Messiah, are collected and brought to a Point in our Saviour: And as it was declared and recorded, many hundreds of Years before it happened, that he should be *cut off out of the Land of the Living*

(u) St. John i. 29.

(x) 1 Cor. v. 7.

Living (y), but not for himself (z), and that his Soul should be made an Offering for Sin (a). So is it confirmed by the Apostles and Evangelists, that he appropriated to himself the Title of the good Shepherd, that layeth down his Life for his Sheep (b)----- that God hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us (c). In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of our Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace (d). And that by his Stripes we are healed (e). The Result then is, as St. Peter represents it, that those Things which God before had shewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled (f).

SERM.
II.

THESE few Passages may suffice (to enumerate all to this Effect, one must transcribe a very considerable Part of the New Testament) to prove the Truth of Christ's dying on Man's Behalf, and being punished in their Stead, in order to free the Transgressors from Punishment. And if our Saviour has by the Sacrifice of himself made Reconciliation

(y) Isai. liii. 8.

(z) Dan. ix. 26.

(a) Isai. liii. 6, 10.

(b) St. John x. 15.

(c) 1 Theff. v. 9, 10.

(d) Ephef. i. 7.

(e) 1 St. Pet. ii. 24.

(f) Acts iii. 18.

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(f) Acts iii. 18.

SERM. ciliation for us,---has ransomed us from Sin,

II. and satisfied God's Justice, which we had by

our Offences most heinously provoked, the Necessity of this Undertaking may be infallibly concluded; since an infinitely-wise Being can do nothing in vain: Nor is it possible to imagine, that God should prepare the bitterest Draught for his own most dearly beloved Son, if our Cure could have been wrought, and our Deliverance, effected by any other slighter Means. It becomes us therefore to embrace it as a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners (g); who, unless he had died meritoriously, must all have died eternally. We should every one of us have found too much Room to bewail our deplorable State in the Language of the Psalmist, *mine Iniquities are gone over my Head, as an heavy Burden they are too heavy for me* (b). But now we, who are in Christ Jesus, see into the intire Sense of that Exhortation, *Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption* (i). We discern, by what Method Vessels of Wrath are converted into Objects of Love, viz. by the Propitiation,

(g) 1 Tim. i. 15.

(b) Ps. xxxviii. 4.

(i) Ps. cxxx. 7.

Propitiation, which has been made for them, SERM.
and not by their own Work or Power: II.

For, *when we were yet without Strength, in due Time Christ died for the Ungodly (k). And thus it behoved him to suffer (l), otherwise we had been undone for ever.*

AND as the Satisfaction of Christ appears from the Account given of it in the Holy Scriptures to have been *necessary*, so must we look on it also, as *sufficient*.

WE cannot throw a greater Reflection on the Deity, than to charge him with forming any Scheme, which will not answer up to the Purpose, it was calculated for. It is for weak short-sighted Mortals to be baulked in their Views, and to project, what they can never execute. But the All-knowing cannot be mistaken, nor the All-powerful be disappointed.

THIS general Remark, founded on the natural Sense, we have of God, and his absolute Perfections, is of itself enough to establish the Sufficiency of Christ's Satisfaction. Though we may very much encrease its Weight by throwing in the Consideration
both

(k) Rom. v. 6.

(l) St. Luke xxiv. 46.

SERM. both of the Ransom, and of the Person,
 II. who paid it. Be the Price laid upon our

Heads never so high, our Deliverer is still able to advance it,—be the Debt, we groan under, never so heavy, our Surety can acquit us from it,—be our Crimes never so many and grievous, his Merits far exceed them all. For *we are not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ (m)*. Had the Treasures of the World, which may obtain the Enlargement of our Bodies from a temporal Slavery, been offered to ransom our Souls from a Spiritual, we might have doubted of their being accepted, and our being set at Liberty: But when we are assured, that *Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Savour, (n)*. What can there be conceived to be wanting to render it effectual?—Or had any Man, how great, how good soever, undertaken the Redemption of his lost Brethren,---or had even the most exalted Creature in the Scale of Beings interposed for their Preservation, we might have apprehended too great Cause to suspect, that the Attempt was far above either of their Capacities, and that

(m) 1 St. Pet. i. 18, 19.

(n) Ephes. v. 2.

that it must cost more to redeem Mankind, SERM. II.
 than they were able to pay: But when the
 Sacred Scriptures instruct us, and call for
 our stedfast Belief, that it was no less a Per-
 son, than the Son of God himself, of Glory
 equal, of Majesty coeternal with the Father,
 who came into the World to bleed and to die
 for us, how perfectly does this Revelation si-
 lence all our Misgivings concerning the Suffici-
 ency of his Sacrifice for the Remission of Sins?

THE sublime Doctrine then of our Lord's
 Divinity ought not to be questioned, though
 it cannot be comprehended. It is a Mystery
 not propounded to puzzle our Understand-
 ings, but to confirm our Hopes: It is the
 main Anchor of our Souls sure and sted-
 fast; and without it, what have sinful Men
 to trust to? They cannot, as we have seen,
 confide in their own polluted Performances,
 the best of which will by no Means stand
 the Examination of consummate Purity,----
 nor can they rely on the Interposition of
 any other Creature, every one having Work
 enough to answer his own Obligations.----
 Neither can they lay Claim to their Maker's
 Goodness, which they have forfeited to such
 a Degree, that the Expectation of its Con-
 tinuance plainly makes his Attributes to clash

F

with

SERM. with one another, exclusive of Faith in a Divine Reconciler.

II.

WHEREAS on the Supposition, that our Saviour is God as well as Man, all Danger ceases, every Difficulty is got over,---Justice is satisfied, and Favour is recalled,---from the grand Event of our Redemption arises unspeakable *Glory to God in the highest, on Earth Peace, good Will towards Men (o)*, and in Christ Jesus, *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other (p)*. When we regard him as God purchasing the Church with his Blood (q), it is not possible to imagine, how the Price paid should fall short of what was, or could be, demanded, and we cannot help concluding, that the Union of the Godhead gave the most efficacious Value to the Sufferings of the Manhood, and rendered his Death a full and perfect Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for Mankind.

THESE Observations on this Head we may corroborate by taking Notice, in what Manner St. Paul usually introduces the Mention of Christ's Satisfaction by his Death:

He

(o) St. Luke ii. 14.

(p) Ps. lxxxv. 10.

(q) Acts xx. 28.

He seldom speaks of this astonishing Act SERM. II.
of his Love, but he ushers it in with a pre-
vious Description of our Lord's essential

Perfection. He tells not the *Philippians*,
that *Christ Jesus made himself of no Reputa-
tion, and took on him the Form of a Ser-
vant, and being found in Fashion as a Man,
he humbled him, and became obedient unto
Death, even the Death of the Cross; till he
had informed them, that being in the Form
of God, he thought it not Robbery to be
equal with God (r)*; and as such, equal to
the vast Undertaking he had gone upon.
When, again, the Apostle insists on his
Master's being a Match for the Work of
Redemption, he brings his Proof from his
finishing the Work of Creation, and con-
ducting the immense Scheme of Providence:
*For by him were all Things created, and by
him all Things consist (s)*. And speaking to
the *Hebrews* of Christ's Atonement, the bet-
ter to demonstrate, that he had by himself
purged our Sins, he represents the crucified
Jesus, as being *the Brightness of God's Glory,
and express Image of his Person, and uphold-
ing all Things by the Word of his Power (t)*.

F 2

THUS

(r) Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8.

(s) Coloss. i. 16, 17.

(t) Heb. i. 3.

68 SERMONS on *several*

SERM.

II.

Thus the Compleatness of our Saviour's Ransom is a Doctrine too weighty and too deeply founded, to be easily overturned! And it is quite strange, that they, who acknowledge the infinite Dignity of his Person, should deny the absolute Sufficiency of his Propitiation. Yet so contradictory a Profession are many Christians observed to make,---even all, who have implicitly surrendered their Faith to the Usurpations of such, as assume the Character of infallible human Guides. It is a favourite Tenet in the Church of *Rome*, that the Sacrifice offered up by our Redeemer on the Cross is of itself an incompetent Atonement; and under Colour of supplying the Deficiency, it has from lucrative Views invented the daily Sacrifice of the Mass, wherein the Priests of that Communion are said to be vested with the Authority of making an Oblation to God the Father, of the Body and Blood of his Son for the Sins both of the Living and the Dead.

BUT what a surprizing Mixture of Error and Wickedness have we here blended together? A Practice this! in which, what is attempted, is in its Nature impossible, and what

SERM.

II.

what is performed, is idolatrous in its Circumstances, as well as scandalously dishonourable to our Lord in its Design. It first pretends to make the Victim, and afterwards to offer it up to God; not content with commemorating and exhibiting the Passion, the *Romish* Clergy arrogate the Power to themselves of changing the Elements in the Eucharist substantially, and not virtually, into Christ's crucified Body, which they hold forth to the People for the Object of their religious Worship, and Sacrifice to God for the Remission of Sin. So that it is difficult to say, whether the Impiety, or the Injury, or the Absurdity, shewn in this Proceeding be the greater. It opposes the clearest Evidence of Sense,---is repugnant to the plainest Principle of Nature,---contrary to unexceptionable Testimonies of God's Word, and destructive to the Office of the great High Priest of our Profession---Christ Jesus is set forth to be *a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedech* (u), and to be possessed of *an unchangeable Priesthood* (x), in which no one went before, or can succeed him. He was, and is the first and the last in his sacerdotal Function, and his Sacrifice being nothing less than himself,

F 3

how

(u) Heb. vii. 17.

(x) V. 24.

SERM II. how can it be thought, that others should have Commission to offer it, were it possible they could do so? Celebrated it may, and must be to the Honour of our dear Redeemer and for the Good of our Souls; but repeated it cannot be: For then *must Christ have often suffered (y).*

Of this the Holy Scriptures strive to give us the strongest Conviction, in testifying, that *we are sanctified through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all (z) who now once in the End of the World hath appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself (a).* And every Priest under the Law stood daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same Sacrifices, which could never take away Sins: But this Man, after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sins, for ever sat down on the Right Hand of God (b), appearing with the most exalted Dignity in the intimate, special, and glorious Presence of the Father for us, and becoming our Advocate in Heaven, as he had been our Priest and our Sin-offering upon Earth. From whence the Argument we are upon, receives no small addition of Force;

(y) Heb. ix. 26.

(a) Heb. ix. 26.

(z) Heb. x. 10.

(b) Heb. x. 11, 12.

Force; and for this Reason he is able to *save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him,---seeing he ever liveth to make* SERM. II.

Intercession for them (c). After he had expressed his Affection in the most astonishing Manner by *washing us from our Sins in his own Blood (d)*, with the same he entered within the Vail into the holy Places not made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true (e), where he, who was our Priest to Sacrifice, is also our Mediator to plead for us so prevalently, that nothing can be conceived to be wanting to render his Atonement infinitely sufficient in all its Parts.

AND had not our Enemies of the Popish Persuasion been quite blinded with the Love of Power, or the Love of Riches, they could not have overlooked so glaring a Truth. Had they considered, that the Saviour of the World is the only Intercessor, and that it is in Virtue of his meritorious Blood-shedding, he mediates between God and Man, they would never have introduced likewise into their religious Offices the Invocation of Saints, with a View of prevailing with them to act as their Sol-

F 4

licitors

(c) Heb. vii. 25.

(d) Rev. i. 5.

(e) Heb. ix. 24.

SERM. licitors in the Court of Heaven, and to hand
 II. up their Petitions to the Throne of Grace.

BUT if they either will not see, or will not acknowledge their idolatrous Superstitions,---if they are determined impiously to worship their Fellow-creatures, whom they ought only respectfully to esteem, let us however be upon our Guard, lest we be beguiled into the like false Belief or evil Practice: And if they will not be converted from the Error of their Ways, let them not pervert us,---let them neither awe us by their Terrors, nor deceive us by their Sophistry.---Let us hold fast Christ our Head, and adhere religiously to him both in his sacrificial and his mediatorial Capacity;---let us preserve our Faith pure, and our Liberty sound, but let us not refuse them our Charity,---let us allow to them, what they deny to us, the Possibility of having a Share even in that Satisfaction, which they so profanely depreciate.

LASTLY, Whilst we contend that Christ's Ransom is sufficient, we cannot consistently reject its being universal. The one consequentially follows from the other, nor can any

any tolerable Reason be assigned, why what SEEM.
is effectual for all, should not be extended II.
to all.

YET many, and some otherwise pious
Persons have there been so selfish in their
Notions, so straitened in their Bowels, as to
confine Christ's merciful Intentions to them-
selves, and those who are Abettors of their
distinguishing Principles, and preclude there-
from all others, even such, as zealously de-
fend all, and no more than, the common
avowed Doctrines of Christianity. If this Limi-
tation of the grand Atonement arises from a
limited brotherly Love, it is a very unchari-
table and criminal Sentiment, and shews,
how much the Maintainers need an Interest
in a Redeemer's Merits, which they will di-
vide with none besides: Or, if it springs
from a Narrowness of Thought and a Misap-
prehension of the Terms, on which our Sa-
viour's Satisfaction is tendered, it is then to
be pittied, but not embraced; since it is an
irrefragable Proof of Man's weak Side, and
of a Proneness to mistake, as often as he
looks into the holy Oracles with a preju-
diced Mind.

BUT

SERM.

II.

But these Prepossessions are not a little worn off; And Truth has got Ground on this Side, how much soever it may have lost on others. Neither is this to be wondered at, seeing it must be very difficult to resist the Force and Clearness, with which the inspired Scriptures speak to our Purpose: When they tell us, as in the Text, that Christ gave himself a Ransom for all, and elsewhere, that *he died for all (f),---tasted Death for every Man (g),---was the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World (h),---and on him were laid the Iniquities of us all (i).*

MORE Testimonies I shall not trouble myself and you with heaping together, where they cannot be wanted to convince every one, not influenced by his own Prejudices beyond God's Word, concerning the Extensiveness of Christ's Satisfaction. We may not, without a Reflection on the Divine Goodness, as we have no Authority from Revelation to, deny the Benefit of it to any: Yet People may debar themselves of it. For as it is reached out to all without Exception,

(f) 2 Cor. v. 15.

(g) Heb. ii. 9.

(h) 1 St John ii. 2.

(i) Isai. liii. 6.

ception, so is it vouchsafed to none without SERM. II.
 Condition; there is no Respect of Persons with the Almighty, but a strict Regard had to Qualifications. So unbounded is the Mercy of Man's Redemption, that many, to whom it has never been revealed, shall notwithstanding feel unexpectedly the happy Effects of it; and withal so indispensable a right Disposition, that many, who have had this Salvation preached to them, shall receive Damage, instead of Advantage, from their superior Knowledge. God willeth all Men to be saved; but there are found such, as perversely rush on Damnation;---Christ would set all Men free, though a great Part of the World choose to continue Slaves. And shall they find Fault with their Deliverer, when the whole Blame is in themselves,---when infinite Grace cannot rescue them from Destruction, without destroying their very Nature, and acting upon them with a Force incompatible with human Freedom?

UPON the Whole, if the Ransom given by Jesus Christ was necessary, let us gladly accept of it,---if it was sufficient, let us rest securely upon it,---if it was universal, let us
 shut

SERM. shut out none from it. A Dispensation so

II. needful, so compleat, so unconfin'd calls

for the utmost Gratitude, which can be due from ransomed Captives to their all bountiful Redeemer; whose Generosity is set off with such endearing and astonishing Circumstances, as, it is impossible, should ever meet in any other Person, but himself. He only could transact so arduous an Affair, and tread the Wine-press of the Divine Fury alone. Through him we must, and let us labour to, be accepted; and as we know the Conditions, let us be diligent to perform them. The Saviour's Office being abundantly executed, let us be in the Number of such, as shall be saved, by doing our Part and answering his Expectations. Let us presume neither to add to his Sacrifice under the Notion of its being deficient, nor to diminish from it, as of small Value and deserving little Regard; but let us think and act with St. Paul, who in few, though very affecting Terms, represents the Greatness of Christ's Satisfaction, Man's lost Estate without it, and important Obligations for it. *For, says he, the Love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all were dead; and that*

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

77

that he died for all, that they, which live, **SERM.**
 should not henceforth live unto themselves, **II.**
 but unto him, that died for them (k). Being
 filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which
 are by Jesus Christ, unto the Glory and
 Praise of God (l).

(k) 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

(l) Philip. ii. 13.





SERMON III

Galatians 3:1-14
Knowing that a letter killeth, not quickeneth, we will not be justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, who hath redeemed us from all unrighteousness, unto himself, by his precious blood, the gift of himself, that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

For we are the children of the promise, as Isaac was, not as Ishmael. For the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that the faith is come, we are no longer under the law. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, who have received the promise of the Spirit, because ye have obeyed the voice of the Son, who have put on Christ, and have been baptized into him, and have received the Spirit of adoption, which crieth, Abba, Father.



S E R M O N III.



Galat. ii. 16.

Knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law: For by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified.



SINCE our Blessed Redeemer SERM. III.
declared in his Life-time, that
he was not sent, but unto the
lost Sheep of the House of Israel (a),---and when he sent
forth his Apostles to preach, saying, the
Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand, he com-
manded

(a) St. Matth. xv. 24.

SERM. . . manded them to go rather to those, and not
 III. into the Way of the Gentiles, nor into any
 City of the Samaritans to enter (b),---
 and himself exercised his Ministry, except in one or two Instances, among his Brethren according to the Flesh,-----neither discovered plainly, that it was his Intention to put an End to the *Mosaical* Dispensation; it is nothing strange, that his Apostles should confine their Preaching to their own Nation, and not be cured of their Prejudices in its Favour, but by immediate Revelation.

THIS was made known at first to St. Peter in the Vision of the great Sheet (c), full of all Sorts of animal Food, both clean and unclean, according to the Law, with an Order from Heaven to kill and make Use of it. And though the Explication instantly followed in his being invited by *Cornelius*, a devout Heathen, to come to his House, and commanded by God to accompany his Messengers; yet it was some Time e'er the Disciples at large were convinced, that the Gentile Converts were not bound to observe the Law of *Moses*, and longer, before it was generally believed, that the Jewish were released

(b) St. Matth. x. 5, 6, 7.

(c) Acts x.

released from it,--that *the Yoke, which nei-* SERM.
ther they, nor their Fathers were able to III.
bear (d), was broken from off their Necks,
 and that the Law, being fulfilled, was abro-
 gated in Christ.

It was on this Subject, that the first Con-
 troversy arose in the Christian Church ; which
 was decided only by the immediate Reve-
 lation of the Holy Ghost. But one Griev-
 ance removed, another soon started up, and
 from this Good no small Evil ensued : For
 many, either through a mistaken or a carnal
 Mind, not making a Difference between the
 Law of Righteousness and the Law of Ordi-
 nances,---between Moral Rules and Political
 Statutes, since they were forbid to retain the
 Whole of their old Religion, were disposed to
 reject it altogether. Hence there sprung up
 among the Believers as great a Mischief as the
 former, and Licentiousness succeeded in the
 Room of Superstition.

Against both these Errors, viz. That the
 Ceremonial Law remained in full Force, as as-
 serted by some, and that the Moral Law was
 become repealed, as pleaded by others, our
 Apostle made a noble Stand. The one he
 restrained by giving repeated Directions to

G

all

(d) Acts xv. 10.

SERM. all the Disciples, now set free from Ritual
 III. Observances, not to use their Christian Liberty for an Occasion to the Flesh (d), or as a Cloak of Maliciousness (e), the other, he wrote some Epistles, expressly to set aside, and even reproved St. Peter for countenancing it by his Practice. The Substance of this Debate he here gives the *Gallatians*; and as well to recover those, who had been carried away with the Dissimulation of some false Brethren, as to confirm those, who continued in the Truth of the Gospel, he explains and establishes the great Doctrine of *Justification by Faith*, which yet has never been free from Opposition in some Shape or other, there having been always misbelieving or ill-living, if not Judaizing, Christians. And however clearly stated and strongly settled, our Apostle left it; still the *Unlearned and Unstable* have often wrested his written Sentiments on the Point, as they have done also the other Scriptures to their own Destruction (f). For some, from St. Paul's laying it down as a first Principle, that *Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ*, have drawn an unauthorized Conclusion, as if a
 naked

(d) Galat. v. 13.

(e) 1 St. Pet. ii. 16.

(f) 2 St. Pet. iii. 16.

naked solitary Belief, or a bare Assent to the Truths of Christianity was sufficient to recommend them to the Divine Mercy in Christ.

SERM.

III.

BUT that these Men are, and will one Day find themselves to be, wretchedly deceived, may possibly appear from the present Discourse.

WHEREIN shall be considered---*What both Faith and Justification mean,---how the One is produced by the Other,---and what those Works are, which are contrary to a justifying Faith, as well as what are included in, and are perfective of it.*

Now Faith is a Term, which, as it frequently occurs in Holy Scripture, has there various Significations given unto it. This it has been common, because it is obvious to observe; though few have understood the Word in all its Variety of Senses, and some have unluckily applied every Meaning to it, but the highest and most important.---- Let us see then, if we can acquit ourselves better.

SERM.

III. In several Places of sacred Writ Faith stands for Fidelity or Faithfulness: Thus the Question of St. Paul to the Romans (g) *What if some did not believe, shall their Unbelief make the Faith of God without Effect?* Must be interpreted after the following Manner; Shall their Infidelity make void the Faithfulness of God, so as that he shall not perform his Promises to *Abraham* and his Posterity! And so likewise should it be understood in that threatening Expression of our Saviour to the leading Men among the Jews (h), *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, ye have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgement, Mercy, and Faith, i. e. Faithfulness in Contracts and Promises, and in civil Intercourses between Man and Man.*---In other Places, Faith signifies the external Profession of the Christian Religion; as when St. Paul exhorts the *Corinthians* (i) to *stand fast in the Faith*, or to persevere in an open Adherence to that Gospel, which they had embraced.---It likewise signifies, in those Passages particularly where Christ bids the Apostles *have Faith in God* (k), and St. Peter tells the Jews,

the

(g) Rom. iii. 3.

(h) St. Matth. xxiii. 23.

(i) 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

(k) St. Mark xi. 22.

*the Name of Jesus, through Faith in his Name, SERM.
hath made this, i. e. the impotent Man III.
strong (l).* In these, I say, and such like

Texts, Faith means that clear Conviction of Mind enjoyed by many of the first Propagators of Christianity, and founded on immediate Revelation, that the Almighty would enable them to work the necessary Miracles for proving the Truth of the Doctrine, which they were ordained to preach.---And sometimes we are to understand by it, that Trust and Reliance on the Power of Jesus Christ and his Apostles expressed by the Persons, on whom those Miracles were performed, to which must be referred the high Encomium of our Saviour on the modest Centurion (m), *I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel.*----

It implies further the Subject-matter of our Faith, or the Gospel itself; as when St. Jude directs the Disciples, to whom he wrote, *to contend earnestly for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints (n), i. e. to be zealous in the Defence of those Doctrines necessary to Salvation, which were revealed by Christ, and preached by his Apostles:* And so when St. Paul requires such, as

G 3

had

(l) Acts iii. 16.

(m) St. Matth. viii. x.

(n) St. Jude, V. 3.

SERM. had the Gift of Prophecy, *to prophesy according to the Proportion of Faith* (o). For to interpret this of the Trust or Office, and not of the Rule, by which it was to be executed, is a new and forced Construction.---We must add, that Faith moreover signifies a firm Persuasion of the Certainty of Rewards to come; on Account whereof the pious Men of old, both before and under the Law, are justly celebrated by St. Paul (p). But though this has been represented to be the principal and most important Sense of the Word, yet surely the justifying Faith of a Christian is of a much more extensive Nature.---Sometimes, again, it means such Evidence as is sufficient to beget Faith and Belief in us; and in this Sense we are said to *walk by Faith, and not by Sight* (q), to have, not ocular Demonstration in our religious Affairs, but God's Divine Testimony, which yields the full Assurance of Faith.---Sometimes it is put for the Resolution of Conscience concerning the lawfulness of any Action, as, *Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin* (r). Whatsoever is not done with a full Conviction of its being commanded, or at least allowed by the Laws of God, to him, who ventures

(o) Rom. xii. 6.

(p) Heb. xi.

(q) 2 Cor. v. 7.

(r) Rom. xiv. 23.

ventures on such a doubtful Matter, it is SERM.
III
Sin.---And, Lastly, over and above all the
afore-mentioned Significations, which Faith
often bears in the Holy Scriptures, it means
most strictly and properly that joint Act
of the Mind and Will, by which, through
God's Assistance, and on his indisputable
Authority, a sound and fixed Assent, not
resting in mere Opinion only, but carrying
its Energy into the Life and Practice, is
given to the great Truths of the Gospel of
Jesus Christ.

THIS is undoubtedly the right Import of
Faith in the Words before us; and the
same Notion too must we entertain of it
in every other Part of the New Testament,
where it stands in Opposition to the Works
of the Law: The Reason is plain; because,
if under the latter are couched all the legal
Observances incumbent on a Jew, the for-
mer will by just Consequence imply the
whole Duty of a Christian.

AND here, as we have the weightiest, and
most considerable Meaning of the Term, we
are enquiring into, so have we likewise the
literal and true Signification of it. Whereas
the rest are figurative and improper; How-

SERM. ~~ever~~ some may have incautiously substituted the one for the other,---have been
 III.  so far misled by Error or Prejudice, as to take the lowest Sense for the primary, the Metaphorical for the Real.

THIS is styled in the Text, the *Faith of Jesus Christ* after the same Manner, as the initiating Sacrament of the Gospel is called the *Baptism of Christ*,---'tis in the Sense of being instituted and appointed by him, but not of terminating solely in him. For were we to view it in its Objects, we should find them to be all Matters certainly revealed, the Doctrines, Precepts, Promises and Threatenings, discovered to us by Almighty God in his written Word: Which therefore we are indisputably bound to search and study with our best Judgment, our sincerest Application, and every Help, we can call in for our Instruction, that our Faith may not be grounded on human Invention, but on divine Inspiration.

NOTHING should be thought trivial, which it has pleased infinite Wisdom to make known to us, infinite Power to confirm, and infinite Goodness to secure, in spite of the Malice of wicked Spirits and wicked Men combined

combined to destroy it. And whilst some SERM.
 Latitude of Opinion may perhaps be inno- III
 cently indulged in Circumstantials, an Unity
 of Belief must be conscientiously sought and
 zealously maintained in those weightier Mat-
 ters ; which enter so far into the Essence,
 and compose the Substance of the Christian
 Religion, that to reject, or to be diffident
 of them, is to make manifest Shipwreck of
 the Faith.

To descend to Particulars, and give a
 Detail of all Points requisite to be believed,
 is not properly within the Scope of my
 present Design, having proposed to consider
 our Faith, not so much with Respect to the
 Matter of it, as the Manner how it ought
 to be exercised ; neither is an Enumeration of
 Christian Doctrines any way necessary here :
 When the inspired Books, which contain
 the Whole of our Obligation in this Case,
 are in every one of our Hands, and we may
 all of us know the Mind of the Lord from
 the least to the greatest ; and, since not
 only the Letter, but also the Spirit of Re-
 velation is to be the Regulator of our As-
 sent, not only the Phrase, but the Meaning
 of Scripture to be attended to, when our
 Church has given us its authentic Sense
 thereof

SERM. thereof in its Liturgy and Articles, as well

III.

as private Divines their Expositions either in larger Theological Systems, or lesser Catechetical Tracts: To all which, it becomes every one, as far as he is able, to have recourse for Information, not however as his Rule, or the infallible Interpretation of it, but as useful Helps to direct his Judgment in fixing within him a right Belief of God's holy Word; it being an established Maxim, with us, that *whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought necessary to Salvation* (s).

WITH this Caution, if we proceed to take a View of Faith in its Nature, we shall easily discern on what a solid Footing we may rest it; while we pay a modest, tho' not an implicit Deference to the Decisions of our Superiors, and wisely employ the Labours of others for our Advancement in the Truth; yet at the same Time religiously lay our Foundation on the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone (t) and build on the Rock of Ages, forming all our Materials by the Model which is set us,---that Word, which

was

(s) Artic. vi.

(t) Ephes. ii. 20.

was at first spoken, and afterwards written SERM.
under the immediate Influence of the Holy III.
Ghost, was confirmed by his Divine Power, 
and has been preserved by his gracious Care:
the sublime Discoveries whereof, so excellent
in themselves, and so fully calculated to
promote the Glory of God and the Hap-
piness of Man, we must maintain and
esteem for the most valuable Treasures, in
Proportion as deluded Misbelievers wrest and
pervert them, or as profane Infidels slight
and ridicule them.

THAT our Faith may be true and genu-
ine, and such as in God's Sight shall never
be reprov'd, the Assent, we give even to the
Revelations of his Will, should be clear and
settled, not confused and wavering. A blind
Faith is no better than a dead one, nor is
the most zealous Profession any way com-
mendable, where it is groundless and void
of the proper Support of Evidence. The
Belief of any Point as coming from God,
which flows not from due Conviction upon
our Minds of its being a Gospel-Truth,
sinks into rash Credulity: Neither does our
Lord himself command us to believe him
inconsiderately and implicitly; but he pro-
duces the strong convincing Arguments of
Miracles

SERM. Miracles and Prophecy to prove his Religion and of Course every Doctrine of it to

III.

be from God: The Works, says he, which the Father hath given me to finish, the same Works that I do, bear Witness of me, that the Father hath sent me (u). And St. Peter requires the Disciples to be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh them a Reason of the Hope that is in them (x). Whenever Notions are taken up by Chance, there is nothing Praiseworthy in their being consonant to Scripture, and if what is right be not by a prudent Enquiry distinguished from what is wrong, no Benefit can accrue from embracing it, since Falsehood would have been as readily received as Truth, had it been first proposed to such unthinking Believers.

WE must however act in this momentous Affair with due Humility and Reserve; and whilst we endeavour in some Measure to search into the deep Things of God, we should take good Heed thoroughly to look into ourselves,---be apprized of the Extent of our Capacity and the Limits of our Understanding; lest, if we attempt to soar too high, we grow giddy and fall headlong into Unbelief, or, if we venture

(u) St. John v. 36.

(x) 1 Ep. St. Pet. iii. 15,

to range too wide, we lose our Way and run astray into the Labyrinths of Error.

SERM.
III.

God's Thoughts, not those excepted, which he has in Part communicated to Man, are still as much above our adequate Conception, as his Ways are above our influencing Direction. There are in the Christian Dispensation, and must be in every one, which is truly Divine,---which has the Deity for its chief Object as well as its sole Author; many Doctrines mysterious and incomprehensible by the human Mind how much soever enlarged. What is finite can never take in, and contain what is infinite; and to believe God no further, than we are able to form a perfect Idea of every thing he advances, is to turn Faith into Vision, to confide not in him but ourselves, and to demand natural Knowledge instead of moral Certainty. We have a very solid Foundation for admitting any Article of sure Revelation, if we see clearly its being asserted in the sacred Records, though it be not fully explained there, nor by any human Means explicable to us. For it is not the Nature of such sublime Things, but God's Report concerning them, that we are to inform ourselves of; and being explicitly convinced

of

SERM. of this, we must acquiesce without requiring any intimate Perception of the other.

III.

Now we must be content *to see through a Glass darkly* (y),---and it is monstrous Arrogance to reject those Declarations God has condescended to make, only because he has not gratified our Curiosity by displaying his Essence and his Conduct more compleatly.

THERE is no Proposition more evident, than that the all-perfect omniscient Being can neither deceive, nor be deceived: His Word consequently must be infallible;---his Veracity unquestionable,---his Testimony placed on a Level with Demonstration; and hence it follows, that our Belief of the most elevated Doctrines of the Gospel, they being first understood, as they well may, to be of an heavenly Origin, rises from Opinion even up into Science: Nor need we justly fear the Imputation of credulous Bigottry for assenting to the Truths of revealed, any more than to those of natural Religion, as many of both are alike unaccountable by us. What stronger Proof can we demand of any Matter, than that God has pronounced it true? And may we not, for Instance, as soon dispute God's existing at all, as his subsisting in

(y) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

in three Persons? If we are assured of that SERM.
by the Dictates of our own Minds, so are III.
we no less of this by the Dictates of his
Holy Spirit.

THIS then is the Trial of our Faith, to embrace all Divine Communications on the Credit of their Author,---to curb the Vanity of our unenlightened Reason so, as it may submit to this higher Principle,---not fit as Judge, where it ought to appear only as Evidence,-----*not dare to require of the Almighty a full Account of his Matters* (2),---not presume to think and say, as some affect to do, who will not trust in the Lord, but lean on their own Understanding, that Religion and Mystery are incompatible, and where the one begins, the other ends.

WERE there nothing in the Gospel more than what is easily fathomable by our short Line;---nothing beyond a just System of sound Morality, it would want one main Proof of its Divinity, which it now enjoys. For no Revelation can come from God and be worthy of him, which is not in numerous Respects enveloped in an awful
Obscurity :

(2) Job xxxiii. 13.

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Obscurity :

(z) Job xxxiii. 13.

SERM. Obscurity: It is most rational to suppose,
 III. that many Parts of it should be above
 ~~~~~ Man's Understanding: The Nature of the  
 Subject, and the Weakness of our Faculties  
 conspire to make our Ignorance in various  
 Points unavoidable,-----Ignorance, I mean,  
 with Regard to our Capacity of accounting  
 for them by the Deductions of Reason, not  
 to our clear Discernment of their being  
 founded on God's Authority; and Objec-  
 tions flowing from such Ignorance can never  
 justly be allowed the least Weight. It is  
 therefore exceedingly befitting us, instead  
 of giving Way to profane Cavil and Dis-  
 pute, piously to rejoice in the Light,  
 which is afforded us, and adore those sacred  
 Truths, we cannot comprehend.

Thus far we have considered, what is  
 meant by *Faith*, as it is an Assent of the  
 Mind to the Doctrines of revealed Religion;  
 an Enquiry the more necessary, now it is  
 grown the fashionable Topic of Declama-  
 tion to decry whatever carries with it a dark  
 and mysterious Aspect. We have seen it to  
 be a very reasonable Subjection of our Un-  
 derstandings to God's infallible Declarations,  
 when conveyed to us through sure Hands.  
 This is one constituent Part of a sound  
 Belief;

Belief; yet to render it effectual to Justification there is another no less essential: If it rests in Speculation and Amusement, what desirable End can it answer? Is it not common to bad as well as good Men,---to those in Favour and those in Enmity with God,---and do not even the Devils themselves believe in this unprofitable Sense of the Expression? SERM. III.

A JUSTIFYING Faith must also have an Eye to the Duties of the Gospel, and enjoy the Concurrence of the Will, moved by its Promises and Threatenings, in order to be enlivened by Practice; that, through the gracious Prevention and Assistance of the Blessed Spirit, there may be a settled Disposition to perform those good Works, which God has ordained for every true Believer to discharge: And whoever lives not according to this Rule, has in Effect renounced his solemn Engagements and is in some Respects worse than an Infidel. Forasmuch as this Man's Actions tally with his Notions; whilst in That the Performances stand in a shameful Opposition to his Professions.



SERM.

III.

If at the first embracing the Christian Religion to repent be made by our Saviour a necessary Step to believing; surely afterward it must be as needful to bring forth Fruits meet for both Faith and Repentance. None of the Divine Gifts are for vain Ostentation, but useful Improvement; as we believe through the Spirit, so are we to walk in the Spirit, and by his Help lead holy and Upright Lives: Otherwise we receive the Grace of God in vain. The Regularity of our Assent to the Doctrines ought to be accompanied with the Sincerity of our Attachment to the Precepts of the Gospel,---the Purity of our Belief to be set off with the Innocency of our Manners,---nor does Faith appear in its proper Majesty, unless supported with Virtue on one Side, as with Knowledge on the other. To be persuaded of this is a Branch of Evangelical Faith, and to behave accordingly is an Effect of it: And if we are not renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, nor diligent to adorn the Doctrine of Christ in all things, our Pretences to Religion are merely so,---our Title to the Name of God's faithful Servants is altogether without Foundation,---we cannot,

but

but with great Presumption, hope for the SERM.  
End of our Calling, even the Salvation of III.  
of our Souls : For *without Holiness*, we are

expressly told, *no Man shall see the Lord* (a).  
An acceptable Faith is always actuated by  
Love, and in the Streams of a hearty Obe-  
dience suitable to its Spring is its Perfection  
seen. Whilst they who in Words believe in  
God, yet *in Works deny him*, are abo-  
minable (b).

Would we therefore be ranked among  
those true Saints, *that keep both the Com-  
mandments of God and the Faith of Jesus* (c),  
let us not dare to divide what he has in-  
separably joined,---let us not rely on the  
strictest Morality exclusive of an Orthodox  
Assent to Revelation,---let us not trust to  
the most zealous Profession of Gospel-truths  
without a pure Conversation : As both are  
necessarily included in that Faith, by which  
we must be justified.

WHAT *Justification means*, I come in the  
next Place to consider ; towards which a  
brief Disquisition will suffice : Since Mankind  
are of themselves much more prone to

H 2

attend

(a) Heb. xii. 14.

(b) Tit. i. 16.

(c) Rev. xiv. 12.

SERM. attend to the Blessings than the Duties of  
 III. the Gospel,---to God's Part of the new Co-  
 venant, than to their own.

JUSTIFICATION then is, in short, the free Act of God, not making wicked Men righteous by his Almighty Power, but reputed Sinners as just by his infinite Mercy, and treating them in that View, like the Objects of his Love: It is his pardoning our Offences and accepting our Persons out of pure Grace and Goodness, through the alone Satisfaction of his dearly beloved Son, in whom he is so well pleased, that he takes Pleasure in none else, but for his Sake. Forgiveness and Acceptance are the two Parts of Justification; as *there is now no Condemnation to them, which are in Christ Jesus* (d) so they who sometimes were far off, are made nigh, and have an Access unto the Father (e). Both these, indeed, with some stand for the same Thing; though, by the more discerning they are judged to be distinct, and the one to contain the other, the greater the less. For accepting the Person of the Sinner, certainly implies more than pardoning his Sin: Every Enemy, who is forgiven, being not of Course, nor pre-

sent

(d) Rom. viii. 1.

(e) Ephes. ii. 13, 18.



sently accepted and admitted to Favour, as SERM.  
a Friend. III.

THIS high Privilege of being pardoned and reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, is in the Text attributed to the *Faith of Jesus Christ*. But how our Apostle is here to be understood, the Misconception of others admonishes us more particularly to enquire.

THE Christian Faith then justifies us, not by Means of its Efficiency. For this is appropriated to God alone; Justification is his peculiar Work: And as he has been pleased to reveal so much of his infinite Nature, as to call for our firm Belief, that it subsists in Three Persons, so has he also taught us in his Word, that each Divine Person is concerned in this blessed Effect, as the proper Cause and Author of it.

THAT God the Father is the efficient Cause of Man's Justification, is a Point hardly questioned; or if it were, might be unanswerably proved by the clear Testimony of holy Scripture: But not to be tedious, I shall instance out of many Places, only in one (f), *It is God that justifieth*; and

H 3  
(f) Rom. viii. 33.

SERM. that the Father is meant here, is evident from  
 III. his being distinguished, in what follows, from  
 the Son, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died* (g).

GOD the Son however is also represented both in the Old and the New Testament to be the efficient Cause or Author of our Justification, and most properly, seeing he laid down his Life to purchase it, *he made an End of Sin, and brought in everlasting Righteousness* (b), in Respect whereof it was foretold of him, that he should *justify many* (i). To which Prophecy the Gospel-Records do directly allude, when they set forth that *the Son of Man came to give his Life a Ransom for many* (k). And yet more fully to the Point does St. Paul deliver himself to the Jews at *Antioch*, that *throug this Man* (i. e. Christ Jesus) *is preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins, and by him, all that believe are justified* (l).

To the Holy Ghost likewise is this Work ascribed, and we ought to exclude the Third Person of the adoreable Trinity from the Glory of it, no more than the Second. The same that sanctifies, justifies too according

(g) Rom. viii. 34.

(i) Isai. liii. 11.

(l) Acts xiii. 38, 39.

(b) Dan. ix. 24.

(k) St. Matth. xx. 28.

according to St. Paul (*m*), and how can it be otherwise? When these Divine Acts, though they stand divided in our Minds for the better apprehending them, are still in Fact so intimately united, that the one never takes Place without the other. By him we are translated from our natural State of Enmity and Condemnation to a regenerate State of Pardon and Grace: This is the lowest Sense of our Saviour's Words to *Nicodemus* (*n*), *Except a Man be born---of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, by whom ye are sealed unto the Day of Redemption* (*o*) and may depend on an honourable Acquittal at the last Judgment, unless ye imprudently deface the fair Impression,

THUS the whole Godhead appears to be the principal efficient Cause of our Justification, consequently it may not in this Respect be attributed to Faith.

NEITHER is a Man justified thereby on the Score of its Meritoriousness. Faith has no more Merit in it, than Works, and it is the utmost Vanity to think it the Price of

H 4 his

(*m*) 1 Cor. vi. 11.

(*o*) Eph. iv. 30.

(*n*) St. John iii. 5.



SERM. his Justification. For this is constantly inculcated on us in holy Writ to be the All-sufficient Sacrifice of Christ's Death. Fallen Man had not, nor could have the least Desert in himself, whereon to ground a Claim of Reconciliation with his offended Maker, and he must have lain under the Guilt and the Punishment of his Sin for ever, had not the eternal Son of God appeared in our Flesh, that he might be *once offered to bear the Sins of many (p)*. So that *we have Peace with God only through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the Atonement (q)*.

NOR, moreover is Justification transferred to us through Faith, as the Instrument of its Communication. For such are the two Christian Sacraments instituted by our blessed Lord; wherein God condescends to strike at first and to ratify afterward a League of Amity with his sinful Creatures. And these solemn Ordinances of Baptism and the Eucharist, considered as foederal Rites and on God's Part, fall under the Notion of Deeds, the former of Conveyance, the latter of Renewal; though, as they are Instances of Gospel Obedience on our Side, they may be fairly ranked among the Terms of the new Covenant.

BUT

(p) Heb. ix. 28.

(q) Rom. v. 1, 11.

BUT Faith, taken in its most extensive View of being the whole complex Duty and Homage of a Christian, contains them all, and is the Cause of our being justified, in the Way of a Qualification: This capacitates, whilst the other invests, not indeed absolutely or irrevocably, but conditionally; and however firmly the gracious Compact is at first executed and then confirmed, yet it subsists in full Force and Vigour no longer, than we are diligent to maintain a sound, lively, and practical Faith.

HERE, and no where else, are we to look for the indispensable Condition, fitly disposing us for Pardon and Acceptance with God, not peremptorily ensuring these Blessings to us, as our own proper Right. When we have fully come up to the Terms of our Covenant, as we well may by the Divine Assistance, our Justification is notwithstanding a Gift, and not a Debt:--- We cannot, after all we have done, strictly demand it:---*We are justified freely by God's Grace (r).* Because we are Sinners still, at the same Time that we are penitent Believers, and can by no Means claim the Favour

SERM. Favour of the Almighty for the Sake of  
 III. our own imperfect Righteousness; but must  
 ~~~~~ ascribe it altogether to the Redemption of  
 Jesus Christ.

WHAT moved the infinite Being to contrive this amazing Work of Man's Justification, was certainly nothing else than his overflowing Mercy and Compassion. It was the boundless Love of the Father to Mankind, which induced him to send his only begotten Son; and the Love of the Son, which prevailed on him to come into the World for so glorious an End and Purpose; which was most compleatly answered by his Obedience and his Sufferings.

By that our Redeemer has sufficiently purchased for us a Discharge from the Guilt of Sin, and a Deliverance from the Condemnation of it: Our most vigorous Performances are found to be shamefully defective, when examined by the Law of Works; and our inherent Righteousness would never justify us, were we to be judged according to that Law: But Christ Jesus having in his own Person, as our Representative, fulfilled it, we are supported against its condemning Power by the Efficacy of his consummate Obedience.

AND

SERM.
III.

AND by his Sufferings a compleat Atonement being made for our Offences, we receive the Pardon of them,---are accepted of God, and admitted to all the Privileges of the New Testament in his Blood; upon our complying with the Condition stipulated in it, and on which he satisfied for us,

Now this Condition is Faith only, if we take it in its most enlarged Sense, as it implies under the full Notion of it Evangelical Righteousness or Christian Obedience: Whereas, if we consider it, as no other than a bare Assent of Mind to the Truths of the Gospel, it is not the sole Condition of Justification, a virtuous Regularity of Life being also thereunto of Necessity required, whenever Time and Capacity are vouchsafed for performing it.

AND this, I conceive, will plainly appear from observing, *what those Works are, which are contrary to a justifying Faith, as well as what are included in, and are perfective of it.*

OUR Apostle argues in the Text on the Supposition, that *a Man is not justified by*
the

SERM. *the Works of the Law*, and concludes, that

III. *by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified*: Where by *Law* it is evident, St. Paul primarily means the positive Dispensation of *Moses*; and his Drift is to prove, that there shall not any one living be reputed just before God and entitled to a future Reward, as such, by Circumcision, Sacrifices, and the like legal Ceremonies.

THE Jews were in general surprizingly zealous for the Law of their Fathers, endeavouring to impose the Yoke of ritual Observances upon the believing Gentiles; and against those it was chiefly, that the Apostle disputed, and took such Pains to settle it for a first Principle, *that we are justified by Faith, and not by Works*. Here we have the main Ground of the Opposition we meet with in his Epistles between Shadow and Substance, Letter and Spirit, Type and Reality; and see into the Purport of his Arguments against such, as strove to magnify the former, which he would depreciate, and to undermine the latter, which he would establish.

Not but there are other Works, besides those enjoined by the Jewish Law, which

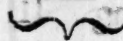
which are or may be opposed to Faith, as *SERM.*
 This is the instituted Condition of our being *III.*
 justified. And among these we must reckon
 even all moral Actions, imagined by the
 Performers to be of an entirely sinless Na-
 ture, and so perfect in every Respect, that
 they build their Justification upon them to
 the Prejudice of the Faith and Religion of
 Jesus. But Persons much more virtuous, I
 apprehend, than any of this Class, have ne-
 ver presumed to think a faultless Conversa-
 tion to be in the Power of any mere Man,
 under the present depraved State of Huma-
 nity. Which therefore, as it cannot be pre-
 tended to without the most arrogant Boast-
 ing, is not expected from frail Creatures by
 an all-merciful God.

It follows likewise, that all manner of
 religious Services, how much soever ex-
 acted by believing, if they are relied upon
 as amply compensating for Justification,
 ought to be esteemed inconsistent with that
 Faith here recommended by *St. Paul*; the
 only valuable Consideration advanced being
 the infinite Merits of our Saviour Christ.

YET it would be a very false Conclusion
 from hence to shut out all good Works
 from

SERM. from having in any View the least Concern

III.

 in this Matter of Justification. Those moral Duties which we owe to God, our Neighbours, and ourselves, and the Gospel clearly enforces (let others look with never so unfavourable an Eye on them also as contrary to a justifying Faith) are doubtless its natural and sure Effects, and should be so regarded by us. They as necessarily flow from it, as the Rays of Light from the Sun ;---are its very Substance diffused abroad, and made to shine before Men : And whenever our Faith is barren of these Fruits, if kindly Seasons be granted for their Production, it is not That, which justifies. Here let us take our Stand, and not be driven from it by any Objections started on Account of the primitive Martyrs, who were many of them put to Death immediately after their being baptized, yet were certainly received to very high Degrees of Favour,---were at once justified and glorified, without behaving suitably to their holy Profession. But those Champions were not so inactive in the Cause of Christ, as is insinuated ; they did all, that could be done in their Circumstances. They cleared their Ground by Repentance from dead Works,---they laid their Foundation by witnessing a good Confession,----
they

they begun the Superstructure by the Stipulation of a good Conscience, and if they did not go on to finish it by the Obedience of Faith in their future Practice, they performed what was more than equal, by sacrificing their Lives in Testimony of the Truth. Besides, theirs, we should remember, is an extraordinary Case, and not rashly to be drawn into a Precedent by others, who enjoy sufficient Opportunities to have Faith both in its Root and Branches.

AND to keep us stedfast in this Persuasion, we want not very cogent Reasons,----Proofs as convincing as those, on which we embrace Christianity itself; there being nothing more plainly revealed, than that a justifying Faith includes, and ought to be accompanied with, a copious Measure of moral Virtue; otherwise it will not, generally speaking, conduct Men finally to Salvation. It is, what we may fairly collect from these Words of our Lord himself; *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he, that doth the Will of my Father, which is in Heaven (s).* And then he presently adds, *Many will say to me in that Day,* (viz.

SERM. (*viz.* in the great Day of Retribution) *Lord,*

III. *Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name have cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me ye, that work Iniquity (t).* From which last Passage it is as easy to remark, as it is important, that no Faith in Jesus Christ, not even a miraculous one, will suffice to justify any, without great Uprightness of living, and that what will qualify a Man for some special Employment under God, will not qualify him, without something else, for Acceptance with him. It will not be enough to have prophesied or cast out Devils in Christ's Name, if our moral Character be not such as becometh his Gospel.

AND many other Sayings are there of our Saviour's importing the Necessity of Obedience to perfect our Faith in order to Justification. As, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the Things which I say? (u).* To call Christ Jesus Lord, is to acknowledge, him for our Divine Master, to believe in him, and to expect Reconciliation by him: But this, he gives us to understand

(t) St. Match. vii. 22, 23. (u) St. Luke vi. 46.

stand, we may look for in vain, if we SERM.
obey not his Commandments And to con- III.
found all such ill-grounded Hopes, he a
little after declares, *Whosoever cometh to me,
and heareth my Sayings, and doth them not,
is like a Man, that without a Foundation
built his House upon the Sand, against which
the Stream did beat vehemently, and imme-
diately it fell, and the Ruine of it was
great (x).*

NOR do any of the Apostles, not even St.
Paul himself, differ from their Lord and
Master in this fundamental Point. As for
St. *Peter*, he exhorts us (y) to adorn our
Lives with the whole Circle of Christian
Graces and Virtues, concluding, that *if ye
do these Things, ye shall never fall: But he,
that lacketh these Things, is blind, and hath
forgotten, that he was purged from his old
Sins.*

St. *John* also bids us be upon our Guard
against those corrupt Teachers, who mag-
nify Faith to the Exclusion of Holiness:
*Let no Man deceive you, says he; He, that
doth Righteousness, is righteous, even as he
righteous (z).*

I

AND

(x) St. Luke vi. 49.

(y) 2 St. Pet. i. 5, 9, 10.

(z) 1 St. John iii. 7.

SERM.

III.

AND St. James it is well known, gives not the least Countenance to the Error of these Men. For, as he rightly argues, *What doth it profit, my Brethren, though a Man say he hath Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith save him? If a Brother or Sister be naked, and destitute of daily Food. And one of you say unto them, Depart in Peace, be you warmed and filled: Notwithstanding ye give them not those Things, which are needful for the Body, what doth it profit? Even so Faith, if it hath not Works, is dead, being alone (a).* This his Doctrine he goes on to illustrate by the Examples of *Abraham and Rahab (b).* And it is remarkable, that St. Paul urges the Patriarch, as an Instance to prove Justification by Faith alone without Works: *Abraham, says he, believed God, and it was accounted to him for Righteousness (c).*

Now as these Apostles of our Lord are allowed by every one, who is convinced of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, to have both written their Epistles by the Guidance and Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, all such must acknowledge, that though there

(a) St. James ii. 14. 15, 16, 17. (b) V. 21, 25.

(c) Gal. iii. 6.

be a seeming, there can be no real Repug- SERM.
nancy between them. Divers Methods have III.

been pursued, to reconcile the apparent Dis-
agreement of the two Apostles: These are
not unknown to the learned, and need not
be known to the unlearned Christian. I
shall therefore pass over in Silence every So-
lution, but what the Course of my Argu-
ment leads me to adopt, and which seems
the most probable, viz. That St. *Paul*
writing to the Jews and Judaizing Christians,
insisted on Justification by Faith alone in
Opposition to the legal Rites; and that St.
James writing to such as had sadly per-
verted the Words of his Brother *Paul* to the
Encouragement of Debauchery, declared they
must not expect to be justified by an empty
Belief, but by such a one, as manifested
its vital Force in the Produce of Piety,
Charity, and Purity: And being so un-
derstood, as they well may, there is no
Contradiction in Sentiment between them,
both speaking and designing the same Thing,
though addressing themselves to different Per-
sons and on different Occasions, they express
their Reasonings in different Terms.

THE Works which St. *Paul* excludes from
any Concern in this weighty Affair, are di-

SERM. rectly the Works of the Jewish Law and
 III. ceremonial Ordinances, consequentially the
 Works of absolute Perfection and of strict
 Merit; none of which St. *James* requires:
 And the Gospel-Services, which the latter
 enjoins, as necessary, the former does by no
 means represent, as injurious or useless. It
 is doing the great Apostle of the Gentiles
 foul Injustice to suppose this, he having
 guarded most strongly against the Reflec-
 tion in several of his Epistles.

HE delivers his Thoughts on this fun-
 damental Article to the *Galatians* thus: *In*
Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any
thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a New Crea-
ture (d). And to the *Corinthians*, *Circum-*
cision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing;
but the keeping the Commandments of God (e).
 And again, he teaches the *Romans* the Ne-
 cessity, and exhorts them to the conscien-
 tious Observance, of all Virtues, in the fol-
 lowing weighty Passage, *Let not Sin reign*
in your mortal Bodies, that ye should obey it
in the Lusts thereof; neither yield ye your
Members, as Instruments of Unrighteousness
unto Sin: But yield yourselves unto God, as
those that are alive from the dead, and
 your

(d) Gallat. vi. 15.

(e) 1 Cor. vii. 19.

your Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto God (f). SERM. III.

AND what may be further look'd upon to be an unanswerable Argument in *St. Paul's* Favour, is, That *Abraham*, in whom he instanced in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, as a Person justified by Faith, is in his Epistle to the *Hebrews* propos'd for an Example of Obedience. By Faith, says the Apostle, *Abraham*, when he was called to go out into a Place, which he should afterwards receive for an Inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went (g).

So that upon the whole, we have very small Room to think, that *St. Paul* designed to extoll an Assent to the Doctrines of Revelation at the Expence of its Duties; any more than *St. James* aimed at crying up Moral Virtue to the Prejudice of an Orthodox Confession. Our Apostle is so far from it, that he makes little Account of Faith itself separate from good Works: For, says he to the *Corinthians* (h), *Though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing.* And,

I 3

indeed,

(f) Rom. vi. 12, 13.

(h) 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

(g) Heb. xi. 8.

SERM. indeed, altogether worthless is an historical
 III. and speculative,---a dead and unactive Belief of revealed Religion,---a Profession which is not ornamented with a consonant Practice, or which implies not an habitual Disposition to exercise every Kind and Degree of true Goodness, whenever it is thrown in our Way.

AND now, if the Case be, as has been before represented, how wretched is the State of many, who stile themselves the Disciples of Christ,---who are forward to own the Truths of the Gospel, but as prone to deny the Power of it in their Lives,-----who are Christians in Name and Heathens in Manners? Their confident Assurance, they know not why, that they are at present, and shall be finally justified, must miserably deceive them; and such nominal Believers, who depend on Salvation, will doubtless find their Hopes void of all solid Grounds.

WE are to be thoroughly persuaded, that, though we cannot be saved by our Virtue, yet we cannot be saved without it,---that it is not enough to have Faith in God, unless this indispensible Subjection of the Understanding causes us to pay him all dutiful

dutiful Submission of the Will,---that it is **SERM.**
 not enough to acknowledge Christ Jesus to **III.**
 be the Saviour of the World, the only be-
 gotten Son of God and one in Essence
 with the Father, unless we diligently keep
 his Commandments, and tread, as exactly
 as our Infirmities will permit, in the blessed
 Steps of his most holy Life,---that it is not
 enough to believe in the Holy Ghost, as
 the Third Person of the adorable Trinity,
 the Assister and Sanctifier of the Faithful,
 if we resist his Operation on our Hearts,
 and turn his Grace into Wantonness.

To maintain undue and presumptuous
 Reliances on the Merits and Intercession of
 our Redeemer to the Contempt of sound
 Morality, is as bad, or rather a worse Cor-
 ruption of Christianity, than to plead for
 the Meritoriousness of our own imperfect
 Works. For whilst this Notion makes the
 Christian Scheme useless, that renders it
 pernicious; whilst the one supposes it need-
 less, that it should subsist as a Rule of Ac-
 tion, the other proves, that it ought not.

BUT we, I trust, have not so learned
 Christ, who declare it to be an indisputable
 Article of our Religion, That in the great

SERM. Day of Account a strict Enquiry will be

III. made, not only how we have believed, but

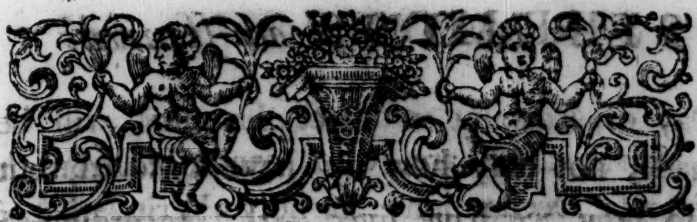
also how we have lived,---that according to our Deeds, as well as our Faith will a Recompense be rendered unto us, and *They, that have done Good, shall come forth unto the Resurrection of Life (i). As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God (k).*

(i) St. John v. 29.

(k) Gal. vi. 16.



S E R M O N



S E R M O N IV.



Philipp. ii. 12, 13.

*-----Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.
For it is God, that worketh in you both to will and do, of his own Pleasure.*



IF People will not be persuaded to interpret Scripture by Scripture, but make it bend to their preconceived Opinions, it is no Wonder, that they deviate always as widely from the Truth, as they differ often from one another. We see the ill Effects of these Prejudices no where more remarkably, than in the contradictory Sentiments, which are entertained of the respective Parts born by God and Man in the grand Concern of Salvation.

SERM.
IV.

SOME

SERM.

IV.

SOME there are, who, convinced from the exprefs Declarations in holy Writ, that *if they will enter into Life, they must keep the Commandments (a)*, and perhaps influenced by other leading Errors, being full of their own Strength, and fancying themselves all-sufficient, have strenuously pleaded for the general Acceptation of the Word *Grace*, whilst they have overlooked the precise and special one,---have shut the Holy Spirit quite out from having any Hand in their Obedience, and allowing God only the Glory of discovering his Will to Men, have advanced their natural Faculties into a Capacity of acceptably performing it.

OTHERS, again, finding it to be also clearly revealed in the same Scriptures, that Christ Jesus is not only the Author, but the Finisher of Man's Salvation, and being prepossessed with a Notion of absolute Election and God's unconditional Decrees, have magnified *Grace* to the utter Disparagement of Works. Nor is it uncommon with such Persons, on the Commission of any Sin, to impute their Fall to the Defect of *Grace*, and not to any Fault in themselves.

But

(a) St. Matth. xix. 17.

But is not this to charge God rather pro-
fanely than foolishly, and to insinuate, that
there was nothing wanting to have preserved
their Innocence, besides the irresistible Influ-
ence of his Holy Spirit, which, they ima-
gine, he is bound to afford them? And
this Way of thinking is observable, not in
the loose and profligate alone, who would
excuse themselves by accusing God; but
the Notion is likewise maintained and pro-
pagated even by those, who affect the Ap-
pearance of great Sanctity, and would be
esteemed to have more Religion than their
Neighbours.

YET such Persons, however pious they
may seem, have certainly not attained to
a right Understanding in divine Matters,
as the Truth is in *Jesus*. Whilst they have
opposed, and that very justly, the gross and
fatal Mistakes of such, as altogether reject
the Doctrine of sanctifying Grace, and sup-
pose Man to be left in the Hand of his
own Counsel, without any Guidance or
Help from his Maker, they have not been
sufficiently on their Guard themselves, but
have incautiously run off into the contrary
Extreme, and peremptorily asserted, that
Man, far from being able to obey God's
Commandments

SERM. Commandments by his own Strength, cannot make the least Advance towards it, and only proceed in religious Affairs, as he is acted upon.

IV.

BUT neither of these Opinions receive any Warrant from the plain Scope and Tenour of God's Purpose concerning us in the Gospel of his Son. Such is our wretched Condition by Nature (which, if we are so blind as not to see it of ourselves, God discovers to us by the Light of Revelation) that exclusive of his Help we can do nothing towards our Recovery out of this State of Sin and Misery. As we must be taught our Duty by his Word, so must we be supported in the Performance of it by his mighty Aid; his Concurrence with us both to prevent and assist us, is absolutely necessary: And what is so needful for us, to enable us to walk before him unto all well-pleasing, is not withheld from those, who are qualified, as all may be to receive it. His Grace is sufficient for us.---God worketh in us to will and to do;---what Help is requisite, we are promised and shall obtain, in order to work out our Salvation. God is never backward in his Part; and if we will not do ours in a Matter of so much Moment,

Moment, where all the Benefit of a good SERM.
 Issue is to ourselves, the Blame falls entirely IV.
 to our Share; and we shall justly reap the
 Fruits of our Perverseness.

LET us then wisely concur with the Grace of God, neither scornfully disdaining it, nor slothfully relying altogether upon it; and let us *work out our own Salvation* according to his prescribed Method, not by our attempting so arduous a Task independently of him, but *by his working in us and with us, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure*. In this middle Way we shall be sure to walk safely; and not incur the Guilt of tempting God on the one Hand, nor the Folly of trusting to a broken Reed on the other.

AND that you may avoid both these dangerous Rocks, on which many have before you made Shipwreck of a true Faith, and a pure Conscience, a few Directions, how to steer a right Course, shall be given you in the ensuing Discourse: Which may, not without some Edification, be opened by observing, — What is meant by *God's working in us to will and to do*. And prosecuted by shewing, — that *this is necessary to*
 our

SERM. *our Salvation.* And concluded by proving,
 IV. ---that *what is thus necessary on God's Behalf*
is wrought by him, though not in such an
absolute Manner, as to supersede our joint
Endeavours.

As to the First, By *God's working in us to will and to do*, our Apostle cannot be understood to mean, whatever any may conceive, such a forcible Operation of the Almighty upon the Soul, as that Man should be quite passive under it, and no other than a mere Instrument in the Hand of an irresistible Agent: But the Phrase must signify only such an additional Supply of Divine Strength vouchsafed to the human Incapacity, as is suitable to the present weak Circumstances of our Nature,---as is proper for a rational and moral, but at the same time an ignorant and depraved Being.

To suppose more than this to be signified by the Expression, is to countenance a very groundless Position, That human Nature was not only unhappily damaged, but perfectly changed by the Fall of *Adam*, and its Freedom not only impaired but lost. To suppose less than this to be the Sense of the Words is to broach an Error as unwarrantable

able as the former, That Man is at least as SERM.
perfect now, as he was, when first created,--- IV.
that his Will is as regular, his Passions as
calm, his Appetites as moderate, as in his
original State.

BUT if both these Suppositions are, as will probably be seen hereafter, equally false and contrary to the Testimony of God and Experience of Man; then our Interpretation of the Passage, we are considering, stands firm, and the Foundation of our Trust in God's gracious Assistance (to a certain Degree only) remains unshaken. And what we are to conclude is, that Power sufficient is given to Mankind by the Spirit of Grace to render them capable of fulfilling the Divine Will, but no impulsive Violence, inconsistent with Liberty, is offered to them: No one has Reason to complain of having too heavy a Burden laid upon him, or a Task too hard for him to go through with; nor yet is there Occasion afforded to any to be idle and negligent, as though all the Work would be performed without his Labour, and he had nothing to do, but to receive the Reward.

THE

SERM.

IV.

THE Operation of the Holy Ghost in our Hearts, as far as his auxiliary Presence is necessary, is never denied us; but further than this we have no Authority to extend our Hopes. Grace is bestowed on us, *whereby we may serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear* (b), as, says St. Paul; and St. Peter tells the true Believers, *Ye have purified your Souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit* (c). He prepares the Mind of them to whom the Gospel is preached, to attend to, consider, and receive it, which if Men with a thoughtless Inattention reject, they must not wonder, that it should be hid from them, and themselves left under their natural Blindness and Depravity; though on their embracing it and striving what in them lies, to comply with the Terms of it, the great Sanctifier of the Faithful surely bestows a proportionably larger Measure of Grace according as they grow in Goodness: So that our Blessed Saviour's Promise is very exactly accomplished, *Who-soever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance* (d).

AND

(b) Heb. xii. 28.

(c) 1 Pet. i. 22.

(d) St. Matth. xiii. 12.

AND that it is requisite, God should give to Mankind such special Grace as this,--- such as in their Circumstances is absolutely expedient to lead them into, and conduct them in, the certain Road to Life and Glory, is manifest from their universal Inability to pay God an acceptable, or even tolerable Obedience otherwise, and of their own Strength. What our dear Lord said to his first Disciples, *without me ye can do nothing (e)*, is full as true with Respect to all future Believers; without the Assistance of his Spirit, whom he sends from the Father, they cannot obey God to the saving of their Souls.

THE Pride of Man, which shews rather the Obliquity than the Rectitude of his Nature, may boast of his Reason, as a sufficient Guide in his forming a right Judgment on what he ought to do, and of an inherent Power to determine and act accordingly. But how weak is the one, and how obscure the other, every one of us, in Fact feels within himself. And should any one be so far infatuated as to deny this, and expect to gain Credit with us; we may

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as

SERM. as well believe a Man, labouring under a

IV. Fever with Delirium, when he assures us of his being in perfect Health and in his sober Senses. To such a vain self-opinionated Extoller of his own moral Sufficiency this Message of our Saviour Christ may be most appositely delivered; *Thou sayest, I am rich, and encreased with Goods, and have Need of Nothing; and knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (f).* This is in Reality the true Picture of human Nature in its present Degeneracy; it is wretched and miserable through Ignorance and Impurity,---poor by the Forfeiture of heavenly Treasures,---blind through the Defect of spiritual Knowledge,---and naked by the Loss of the Robes of Righteousness. But in a State of Grace all these Wants are copiously supplied;---our Ignorance is informed,---our Corruption is purified,---our Poverty is enriched,---our Blindness is enlightened,---and our Nakedness is clothed; and, how deficient soever we are in ourselves, we partake of the *Fulness of him, that filleth all in all (g).*

SHALL we then despise, what we so greatly need? Or disown, what we so plentifully receive?

(f) Rev. iii. 17.

(g) Ephes. i. 23.

RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS. 131

receive? Nay, what, it is reasonable to believe, Man both needed and received in his Season of original Innocence, e'er he had defiled and weakened himself by the most ungrateful Rebellion against God. For, as a Creature, he could not be made all-perfect, this being the incommunicable Property of the infinite Creator, and consequently must require some Support from a superior Power. He was formed, nor was it possible for him to be formed otherwise than liable to Defilement and subject to Sin, though pure and sinless,---well-provided for standing compleat in Holiness, by the Help of God, yet capable of falling through the Abuse of his Liberty on the approach of Temptation, as the Event too fatally proved.

AND if Man stood in no small Need of the Assistance of his Maker, even during the Time of his unsullied Integrity, and in spite of it contracted Guilt and Pollution, must it not be much more necessary for us under our sad and degenerate Circumstances? When an original Stain and universal Depravity appear to have spread over the whole Race of *Adam*, in whom we were

SERM. made Sinners (b). From whence it comes

IV. to pass, that we are conceived in Iniquity and born in Sin,---that as soon almost as we come into the World, the fatal Propensity shews itself, for we quickly go astray and turn every one to his own Way,----that *the whole World lieth in Wickedness (i)*,----*That in our Flesh dwelleth no good Thing; for to will is present with us, but how to perform that which is good, we find not,---but we see another Law in our Members, warring against the Law of our Mind and bringing us into Captivity to the Law of Sin (k).*

WHO now, that reflects with any Degree of Seriousness on the Apostle's Description and his own Feeling, can have the Insolence to give the Scripture and his Heart the Lye,---to assert and pretend to reason upon the Point, That there is no moral Defect in our Constitution? It becomes us better to lie down in our Shame, and to acknowledge our Vileness, as *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing that is good, but our Sufficiency is of God (l)*: Nor should we have Power to do Good, were it not given us from above. Since our depraved Affections

(b) Rom. v. 19.

(i) 1 St. John v. 19.

(k) Rom. vii. 18, 23.

(l) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

Affections are continually drawing us into Sin and Vanity; and into these, should we be much oftener and much farther, than we are, hurried, did not God's preventing and restraining Influence keep us back. For according to St. Paul, it is *the Spirit*, who *giveth Life* (m): Through him it comes to pass, that we are enabled to rise to a spiritual Life at present, and to prepare for an eternal Life to come. And according to our Blessed Lord, *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God* (n); where, as the general Obligation to make Use of the visible Sign, and its being the ordinary Means of conveying the invisible Grace, are both asserted: So does it appear, that without the inward cleansing of the Soul by the Spirit, the outward washing of the Body with Water can be of no Consequence; and unless, by the real and effectual, though, secret and imperceptible Operation of the Holy Ghost within him, the polluted Sinner is, as it were, made a new Creature,--- has his Nature changed from Evil to Good, and being so regenerated lives in due Conformity to the Divine Will, like a faithful Subject of the Kingdom of Grace, he shall

K 3

get

(m) 2 Cor. iii. 6.

(n) St. John iii. 5.

SERM. get no Admittance into the Kingdom of

IV. Glory.

FROM the foregoing and many other like Passages of holy Scripture may we learn, how necessary it is for the Renewal of our inner Man, that Almighty God should vouchsafe us the gracious Supports of his blessed Spirit; so that this fundamental Article of *his working in us to will and to do* is built on the strongest Evidence, the Nature of the Dispensation will admit of: Nor need we to add for its fuller Confirmation any more Proof than what is contained in the Words of St. Paul, from which the Necessity of the Divine Succour towards mortifying the Deeds of the Body or subduing our natural Corruptions is most undeniably discovered. *If ye live after the Flesh, says the Apostle, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye shall live (o).*

AND that, what is thus necessary on God's Behalf, is wrought always by him within us, we may be infallibly certain from his Word by Revelation,---from his Attributes by Reason.

THE

THE Force of the former of these Arguments has been already in a good Measure seen: Yet it can be very well supported by observing, how God promised by his Prophets, that in the Gospel-state he would pour out his Spirit upon all Flesh (p), and upon the House of David the Spirit of Grace (q). This he has amply performed by bestowing both the extraordinary and the ordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost on them, that obey him (r), whose supporting Presence helpeth our Infirmities (s), and strengtheneth us with Might in the inner Man (t), whose Fruit is in all Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth (u), and by whose Power we abound in Hope, and are filled with all Joy and Peace in believing (x).

AND as we read this comfortable Assurance in God's Word, so may we also prove it from his Nature; and be as certain of it, as that he is consummately just and good. Goodness and Justice are Perfections, which belong to him in the highest Degree, and he can be as soon without Existence, as

K 4

without

(p) Joel ii. 28.

(q) Zech. xii. 19.

(r) Acts v. 32.

(s) Rom. viii. 26.

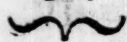
(t) Ephes. iii. 16.

(u) Ephes. v. 9.

(x) Rom. xv. 13.

SERM. without these Attributes. If then it be in-

IV.



all necessary Grace and Assistance towards serving him acceptably, and duly discharging the Offices enjoined, we may safely conclude, that he will not withhold it: And that such a Procedure in God, would no way coincide with his infinite Perfections, a slight Attention to the Subject will discover. In Respect of Goodness the Point is clear, neither can it be reconciled with Justice. For the one in the strictest Notion of it requires, that no Person be miserable without his own Fault; and the other, that every one be happy according to his Capacity. But since Man, if refused the Aids of God's Holy Spirit, is unable to please him, to will and to act, as he commands, it follows, that the expecting his Obedience and not vouchsafing the proper Helps towards the Performance, is in Effect the calling upon him for what it is impossible, he should ever pay; and such a Demand can never be made by a Being perfectly good and just, especially under the Penalty of Damnation on Non-payment. Because this would be to condemn a poor undeserving Creature to the most dreadful Sufferings, contrary to the known Rules of Goodness and even Justice too:

too: And undeserving he must be, who SERM.
 fails in his Duty and comes short of the IV.
 Glory of God through his Misfortune rather than his Crime, and offends more from a natural than an acquired Depravity.

God was not pleased, it is true, to prevent the Fall of our first Parents; nor can we see, that he was obliged to: Yet it seems to have been his Concern, dictated to him by his own essential Excellencies, to work out a Recovery; which he has sufficiently done by the Redemption of his Son and the Sanctification of his Spirit. To have destroyed human Nature immediately upon Transgression, when the deplorable Effects were to reach down to Millions of Descendants, not Parties in it, would have been so far from an Injury, that it must have been the utmost Compassion to them: Though to continue the Species and make all suffer for the Crimes of two Individuals, what can be called unjust and unmerciful, if this be not? But every such heinous Charge God has fully guarded against by providing a Remedy as efficacious, as the Disease is malignant. For the Merits of Christ, and thro' Faith in his Blood, Repentance is granted unto Life, and by his prevalent Mediation abundant

SERM. abundant Grace is ensured to us towards
IV. both our new Birth and spiritual Growth.

So that it is evident from the unfolding of the Divine Scheme under the Gospel, no one shall miss of Happiness and incur Misery, except for his own wilful personal Demerit. The original Taint communicated from *Adam* is cleansed by Jesus, and the consequent Inability to obey God in Righteousness, is repaired by the supernatural Assistance of the Holy Ghost. This, as Matters now stand, it is necessary that Man should receive, or be punished for not performing Impossibilities; this therefore is imparted to him as certainly, as God is good and just.

HERE, however, we should be warned against raising our Expectations too high, it being a faulty Presumption to promise ourselves more than our kind Benefactor has promised us. What is needful for him to work in us, in order to make up the Deficiency of our own Strength, and only That is, in the common Course of his Dealings, wrought by him; he does nothing unnecessarily; our Wants he graciously Supplies: But that he will do all for us, when we can do something for ourselves,

selves, we have no Room to hope, and shall SERM.
 be sure to have such vain Hopes miserably IV.
 disappointed. ~

THIS Doctrine may be very usefully illustrated, by applying it to the three great Duties of the Gospel, Faith, Repentance, and Obedience: These all are in a sound Sense the Gifts of God, and what is requisite on his Part to their Production in us, he never with-holds.

THUS with Respect to the first of them, *Faith.* The Lord is said to have opened the Heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the Things which were spoken of Paul (y), and was baptized being found faithful. Yet this Faith of hers, which qualified her for Admittance into the Christian Church, is said to be the Effect as well of her own bearing as of the Lord's opening her Heart. These are also our Saviour's Declarations, that *all, that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me: and that no Man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father, or except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him (z),—draw him not by Force and Violence, like a Brute Beast, that hath no Will or Understanding; but*

(y) Acts xvi. 14.

(z) St. John vi. 37, 65, 44.

SERM. but in a Method suitable to a reasonable and
 IV. free Nature.

So that the true Meaning of these disputed Passages must be, that a Man cannot believe the Gospel, unless God by his holy Spirit disposes and puts his Mind into a fit Temper seriously to weigh and examine the Evidence on which Christianity is built, and by Grace prepares his Heart to embrace it.

BUT if this be necessary, it may be asked, Why all Men should not be thus prepar'd? The Rejection of Christ's Religion is as penal as any Offence can be; for *he that believeth not shall be damned* (a). And if no Man cometh to our Saviour, and by Faith is made his Disciple, but such as are disposed and prepared by the inward Motions of the Holy Ghost, does it not seem a very just Conclusion, that God, who is no Respector of Persons, can overlook none and leave them to be unprepared?

THIS Objection may be cleared up by observing, that tho' God will infallibly do whatever is right and equitable, towards all his Creatures, yet many may not by his Grace
 be

(a) St. Mark xvi. 16.

be effectually influenced to receive and believe the Gospel: The Reason is, because they have their own Will still to govern them; and notwithstanding Life is offered to them, and placed within their Reach, they may however thrust it from them, and choose Death by resisting and quenching those gracious Impressions, which would otherwise be available to Salvation. The Spirit will not, and is not bound to, strive always with Man; neither does he work in so commanding a Manner, as to overpower the Perverse; and his merciful Condescension in making repeated Tenders of Assistance will abundantly vindicate his severest Resentments of the Refusal.

SERM.
IV.

THE like may be urged in Relation to Repentance. This is represented to be the Gift of God, as well as Faith. *Him, i. e. Jesus, says St. Peter to the Jews, hath God exalted with his right Hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give Repentance unto Israel (b).* And in Meekness, says St. Paul to Timothy, *instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth (c).* But then these Texts must not be understood

(b) Acts v. 31.

(c) 2 Tim. ii 25.

SERM. stood in the utmost Latitude to which the

IV. Words may be extended. By God's giving

Repentance is meant no more than his affording Mankind Grace sufficient and other Means requisite to bring them thereto; by which, after all, many may be, and are, not brought to so happy a Change.

AND agreeably *the Goodness of God* is said by the Apostle *to lead them to Repentance*, who were yet not actually prevailed on to repent; being such as *after their Hardness and impenitent Hearts treasured up to themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God* (d), as the necessary previous Steps were taken by him towards the Conversion of those incorrigible Sinners, so very properly may he be said to give them Repentance by making them the Offer and yielding them all reasonable Assistance to close with it, though he did not perform the whole Work for them, nor discharge their Part together with his own. If the expected Reformation was not at last actually produced, this arose not from any Deficiency of Grace, God having wrought in them whatever was sufficient on his Side to so desirable an Effect

(d) Rom. ii. 4, 5.

Effect, had their own honest Endeavours SERM.
 concurred with his gracious Energy: And IV.
 that he should do more for wicked Men,
 whilst they will do nothing for them-
 selves, it must be the Height of Inso-
 lence to think and require.

ALL needful Help and Support does God likewise afford to Men proceeding in their Christian Obedience, in order to their finishing it with Joy. He imparts more Grace to those, who have made a good Use of what was before vouchsafed them; though *from him that hath not, i. e. who improves not the Measure of Divine Aid which he has obtained, shall be taken away even that, which he hath (e).* The Spirit quickens us to good Works, and the more we advance in them, the more we grow in Grace and encourage him to fix his Abode with us. To obtain this Mercy was the End of St. Paul's Prayer for the *Philippians*, That their Love might abound more and more in Knowledge and in all Judgment, that they might approve the Things that are excellent, being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness (f). And the Ground of his Intercession was, his being confident of this very Thing,

(e) St. Matth. xxv. 29. (f) Philipp. i. 9, 10, 11.

SERM. *Thing, that he, which had begun a good*

IV. *Work in them would perform it until the*

Day of Jesus Christ (g). He was persuaded, that they and all other Christians might, if they would, so run, as to win the Prize, which however was not to be obtruded upon them, without their moving one Step in the Race set before them; and that God would with-hold nothing proper for him to do in order to secure it to them, provided they ceased not to push on with Vigour and persisted in their Christian Course under his Divine Guidance.

THIS is what the Supreme Disposer of all Things positively demands in some Degree or other from every one of us; we must do our utmost at all Times and in all Circumstances; God therefore ties it down as an unalterable Rule for his Conduct towards Mankind, that the *Servant which knew his Lords Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes. But he that knew it not so perfectly as the other, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, according to his Proportion of Knowledge, shall be beaten with few Stripes (h).* And the Reason given by our Saviour

(g) Philipp. i. 6.

(h) St. Luke xii. 47, 48.

Saviour is general, extending as well to the SERM.
 Communications of Strength, as to those of IV.
 Light: So that the Operations of God's Spirit on our Hearts do by no Means exclude our most zealous Endeavours, but rather enforce them; since his working in us will not excuse us, in Case of Negligence, from Blame and Punishment. And moreover, it is urged by our Apostle, in the Text, as a Motive to animate us in working also: *Work out*, says he, *your own Salvation with Fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* His Grace is, indeed free,---Man has no Claim of Right upon his Maker for it,---it is entirely of his good Pleasure, that he bestows it, and we can no more demand, than deserve it.

BUT if the Divine Influences did really supersede and render useless our Industry, St. Paul's Reasoning here would be altogether unaccountable; and what he presses as an Argument, why we *should* work out our Salvation, would be the strongest Reason, why we *need* not. If God alone did transact the whole Affair, there could be no Occasion for any additional Labour from us, much less for our working with Fear and

L Trembling.

SERM. Trembling. For what Cause has he to fear,
 IV. who cannot miscarry by his confident Security,---what Inducement has he to tremble for his Salvation, who is persuaded, that it requires none of his Care and Diligence to obtain it?

If this were the Case, not only the Apostle's Arguing must be most absurd, but moreover the Commands, the Exhortations, the Promises and the Threatenings, which are to be met with throughout the Holy Scriptures, tending to move Men to take Care of their eternal Interests, would be quite without Foundation. For to what Purpose can any of these serve, if God works absolutely in Man, and there is nothing to be executed by Man himself?

By those Applications, which plainly suppose some Power in human Nature to will and to do, God must intend, if any thing be intended by them, to induce, not force us to repent, and by Repentance, carry us on to Salvation. We find God commanding and exhorting by his Prophets in the Old Testament, and by his Apostles in the New. Thus by *Isaiab* (i), *Wash ye, make you*

(i) *Isai.* i. 16, 17.

you clean, put away the Evil of your Doings SERM.
from before mine Eyes; cease to do Evil, IV.
learn to do well:---By Jeremiah (k), O Je-

rusalem, wash thine Heart from Wicked-
ness, that thou mayest be saved: How long
shall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee?--

By St. Paul, That ye put off concerning the
former Conversation the old Man,---and that
ye put on the new Man (l), and Stand fast
in the Faith, quit you like Men, be strong (m),--
and by St. James (n), Cleanse your Hands,
ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts, ye double
Minded.

Now these and such other Com-
 mands and Exhortations (as others number-
 less almost are to be met with both in the
 Legal and the Evangelical Books) imply,
 that they, to whom they are directed, must
 be able, not exclusive of the Divine Grace,
 but by a competent Measure of it, without its
 uncontrollable Impressions, to yield Obe-
 dience to and comply with them. A Being
 of infinite Clemency and Wisdom would not
 enjoin and invite Men to do, what he
 knew they were in no Degree capable of
 doing; as this must be a manifest Token
 of Cruelty or Weakness: Nor would he re-
 quire under the severest Penalties any of his

L 2

Creatures

(k) Jerem. iv. 14.

(l) Ephes. iv. 22, 24.

(m) 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

(n) St. James iv. 8.

SERM. Creatures to undertake, what, if ever it was
 IV. performed, must be brought to pass wholly
 by himself.

THAT nothing can be our Duty, further than we are able to fulfil it, is most evident: No-body is obliged to that, which is impracticable. If Mankind, consequently, never had, nor will have, any Power within them to repent, believe and obey, it is ridiculous, it is profane to imagine, that God demands such religious Acts, from them, and will call on them to account strictly for their Behaviour in this Respect,--- will reward them, if approved, and punish them, if condemned.

BUT that God expects our Submission to his Will, has been already shewn; and why else has it been revealed to us? It is not Knowledge, but Practice; which is the End of his Precepts and Persuasions: And he has therefore enforced them with Promises and Threatenings, the most affecting, which can be applied to our Hopes and Fears, the more strongly to engage our Observance of them. The Result of all which must be, that we have Ability, more or less, to observe them, and that God's working in us cannot

not be in such an irresistible, absolute Manner, as to exclude our own. For were it so; all Commands and Exhortations, all Promises and Threatening would be perfectly groundless: And what the Almighty would have done, he could, if he pleased, produce in us without them. SERM. IV.

God's Power, indeed, would meet with no Obstruction here, were he disposed to exert it: However, as the Liberty of Man's Will, which we are all conscious of, would thus be quite taken away, and the Actions performed, be not properly ours, but God's; so must we cease to be moral and accountable Creatures,---must be unqualified for Favour on the one Hand, undeserving of Punishment on the other. Upon the whole then, Reason and Religion firmly unite in these Conclusions, That, after God has done what is requisite on his Part, something still remains for Men to do in order to work out their Salvation,---that if they neglect their Duty and their Interest, it is not for want of Ability to prosecute both, but through Obstinacy and Perverseness,---and that God has given spiritual Strength sufficient unto every Man, would he but use it and improve the Talent of Grace put

SERM. into his Hands. Here, as a on sure and solid

IV. Bottom, let us rest ; nor let any Difficulties, which may be thrown in our Way, make us to waver in our Belief, or to falter in our Goings.

If it be alledged, that Men are represented in the Scriptures to be *dead in Trespasses and Sins* (o),---let us consider, that figurative Expressions are not to be interpreted with a literal Exactness ; or allowing this particular one were so, yet that it does not reach our Case. For this relates to Men in a State of Nature under the Curse of *Adam*, out of which we Christians are rescued, as *we are begotten again unto a lively Hope* (p),---are *passed from Death unto Life* (q), and are *alive unto God by Jesus Christ our Lord*. In receiving this spiritual Life it must be allowed, we were entirely passive : But having obtained it, we may weaken or may strengthen it,---may preserve or may destroy it,---may so *fall away, as not to be renewed unto Repentance* (r) or may droop and recover again, and grow at last to perfect Manhood, *to the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ* (s). Though therefore the new Birth be

(o) Ephes. ii. 1.

(p) 1 St. Pet. i. 3.

(q) 1 St. John iii. 14.

(r) Heb. vi. 6.

(s) Ephes. iv. 13.

be the single Work of the Spirit, and a SERM.
 gracious as well as a glorious Life the sole IV.
 Gift of God; still it does not from hence
 follow, but that as the Attainment of the one,
 so the Progress of the other may in a cer-
 tain Degree be the Result also of our own
 best Endeavours.

OR, if it be pleaded, that God *will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy* (t),
 Let us take Care rightly to distinguish be-
 tween national Election to temporal Privi-
 leges, and personal Election to eternal Life,
 and so to understand such Passages of Scrip-
 ture, as that the Revelation of Christ may
 not be made to contradict the Religion of
 Nature, nor we tempted to imagine God's
 Will to be unconduted by perfect Wisdom,
 Justice, Goodness and Truth. Yet thus un-
 worthily must we conceive of the infinite
 Being by maintaining, that his Mercy is ab-
 solute and unconditional, and his Grace too
 forcible to be resisted. For no tolerable
 Reason can be assigned on this Supposition,
 why all Men should not be saved, if any are,
 without charging upon God the cruellest
 Partiality and most arbitrary Tyranny:
 Mercy we must grant to be under no
 Restraint, and Grace of universal Extent:

L 4

However

(t) Rom. ix. 15.

SERM. However we shall forfeit them both,--

IV. be neither the Subjects of this, nor the Objects of that; unless under their Influence we tend towards the Point, they direct to, *i. e.* cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of the Lord (t), and purify our Souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit (u).

To conclude, therefore, Let us not think of standing still, and expect to see the Salvation of God, but let us rouse and exert ourselves, and use all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure. Let us not trifle away the Day of Life idle and unconcerned, as though we had no Employment to set about, or were able to do nothing; but being hired into the Vineyard, let us fall to the Task allotted us, and redeem the Time we have lost, by increasing our Industry, for the future.---Let us humbly unite our Labours to the Divine Assistance; and so shall we act securely, whilst we work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, as is required of us,---with Caution, but not Terrour,---with Vigour, but not Arrogance. Let us remember, that a vain Conceit of our Self-sufficiency will be as fatal

(t) 2 Cor. vii. 1.

(u) 1 St. Pet. i. 22.

fatal, as a weak Opinion of our utter Inca- SERM.
 pacity; and he, who confidently undertakes IV.
 Things beyond his Strength, and disdains
 the Help reached out to him, must fail of
 Success as certainly, as he, who timorously
 doubtful of *his*, and fancying that to be
 wholly lost, which is but impaired, has not
 the Resolution to attempt any Thing; and
 that if we are, and must be supported by
 the Holy Spirit in this most important Bu-
 siness, we can safely depend on his Suc-
 cours only so long, as we answer the De-
 sign of them: To treat them with Indiffe-
 rence by making no Use of them, or with
 Contempt by putting them on our Drud-
 gery, is the ready way to lose them. Their
 heavenly Leader moves not one Step with-
 out us; if we desert our own Cause, he
 never will alone defend it; and if we en-
 gage not voluntarily in it, this is a Service
 into which we shall not be pressed.

BUT how warm and resolute soever we
 may appear, either in making or maintaining
 our Conquests, let us be cautioned not to
 assume the Honour of them to ourselves;
 Let us be sensible of our utter Insufficiency
 without God's efficacious Aid,---how small
 a Part we bear in the Labour tho' the Fruit

is

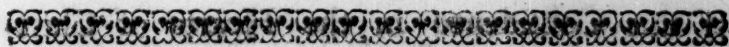
SERM. is all our own; and when the Principle, by
 V. which we concur with him, whether it be
 ~~~~~ inborn or infused, and all the Motives,  
 which quicken this Principle to Action,  
 are from him, let us ascribe the whole  
 Glory of our being righteous here and  
 happy hereafter to God alone.

To be short; instead of abounding in our  
 own Sense,-----of confiding in our own  
 Strength, let us beseech God to instruct us  
 more and more in the right Knowledge of  
 his Will, and to assist us in the worthy  
 Performance of it,---to afford us a clear Con-  
 viction of our Inability to discharge it ex-  
 clude of his Help, and of the Weakness of  
 such Excuses for Disobedience, as are formed  
 on the Supposition of our wanting, what  
 he in Fact copiously pours down upon us.  
 Thus the mutual Necessity of his Grace and our  
 Endeavours being seen and attended to, that  
 will animate us in the Pursuit of good Works,  
 and these persisted in will continually draw  
 down further Supplies of the other, till it  
 is consummated in Glory. *To which, &c.*





## S E R M O N V.



I St. John iii. 2.

*Beloved, now are we the Sons of  
God, and it doth not yet appear,  
what we shall be: but we know,  
that when he shall appear, we  
shall be like him; for we shall  
see him as he is.*



**A**S a Spirit of Persecution raged SERM.  
in the Enemies of the Cross of V.  
Christ from the first Preaching  
of the Gospel, St. John, sensible  
of the severe Trials, and strong  
Temptations to Apostacy, which the new  
Converts would be exposed to, after hav-  
ing cautioned them against Seducers, and  
exhorted them to *adide in the Truth*, which  
they

156      SERMONS *on several*

SERM. they had *heard from the Beginning (a)*, pro-

V. ceeds to engage them in a steadfast Adherence  
 ~~~~~ to the Faith, from the Greatness of the Reward  
 annexed to it, being no less than *eternal Life*
(b). And the Assurance thereof by the Ear-
 nest of the Spirit, *the Unction from the Holy*
One (c). And then he lays the Foundation
 of this Confidence in the Hearts of Chris-
 tians on the singular Love of God towards
 them, manifested by his calling them his
 Sons, *Behold what manner of Love the Fa-*
ther hath bestowed upon us, that we should
be called the Sons of God (d).

AND what could be better calculated to
 keep up the Spirits of the Disciples, than
 such weighty and affecting Considerations?
 Which our Apostle therefore so earnestly
 inculcates, because he well knew, that with-
 out these Encouragements, their Strength
 would be too prone to fail, their Zeal be
 too apt to be extinguished; under the Pres-
 sures, they were sure to meet with; it being
 impossible, but that Offences must come
 from an unbelieving World. For they were
 looked upon with a jealous Eye by
 the Gentiles, who had been persuaded to
 think,

(a) St. John ii. 24.

(b) V. 25.

(c) V. 20, 27.

(d) Ch. iii. 1.

think, that the Followers of Christ Jesus did *SERM.*
all contrary to the Decrees of Cæsar (e), V.
 and with a malicious Eye by the Jews, who
 reckoned them no better than impious Sub-
 verters of the Law of *Moses (f),* which they
 were prejudiced to suppose to be of perpe-
 tual Obligation.

So that the Jew and Gentile, who could
 accord in nothing else, yet united heartily
 to harrafs and oppress the Christian. Nor
 could milder Treatment be expected by
 those, who had been expressly forewarned,
that the Disciple is not above his Master,
nor the Servant above his Lord (g), and
 who well knew, that against their Lord
 and Master Jesus Christ, *both Herod and*
Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the
People of Israel were gathered together (h);
 whom, after the most despiteful Usage and
 barbarous Indignities offered to him, they
 had *with wicked Hands crucified and slain (i).*

ALL this, as it was not done in a Cor-
 ner, and was the repeated Subject of all the
 Apostles most publick Discourses, they, who
 believed in the Gospel on their Preaching,
 could

(e) Acts xvii. 7.

(f) Acts xxi. 28.

(g) St. Matth. x. 24.

(h) Acts iv. 27.

(i) Acts ii. 23.

SERM. could not be ignorant of; and were besides
 V. taught to look for as little Mercy from
 their Saviour's Enemies, as he himself had
 found, being to be *hated of all Men for
 his Name's Sake* (k).

HENCE the very benevolent St. *John* judged
 it altogether necessary for him to give the
 Faithful under these Discouragements some
 Consolation, by putting them in Mind, that,
 however distressed their Condition might be,
 still it was really preferable to that of their
 Persecutors, and upon the whole, much more
 happy as well as honourable.

THIS he does in the Words I have read
 to you; concerning which, that they are a
 solid Ground to Christians of the most com-
 fortable Reflections, it shall be my Endeav-
 our to evince in the present Discourse:
 And I shall, I presume, to a tolerable De-
 gree, have obtained this End;---when I have
 shewn *how and in what Sense we may be
 said to be the Sons of God*, and proceeded
 afterwards to consider, *the Duties and Pri-
 vileges which attend that high Character*.

THE Title of being the Sons of God has di-
 vers

(k) St. Matth. x. 22.

SERM.

V.

vers Meanings given to it in the Sacred Writings.

IN its primary Sense and most exalted Signification, Christ Jesus our Saviour, the *First-born*, or Lord, *of every Creature* (l) can alone be said to be the Son of God, as having been begotten by his Almighty Father from all Eternity, and being so the Son of God, as to be equal to, and one in Essence, with the Father: *As the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son* (which he declares in his Words, and, demonstrates in his Works) *to have Life in himself* (m); whereby he is, absolutely speaking the living and true God.

THIS Mystery, however incomprehensible, by us, imperfect Creatures, ought to be received with the utmost Fullness of Assurance; since it is certainly revealed in holy Scripture: From which Testimony of his infallible Doctrine we are satisfied beyond all reasonable Doubt, that Jesus is the Son of God by an eternal Communication of the Godhead, and that this is the Generation,---whereon his Divine Sonship is founded, in a Way not to be accounted for, nor even conceived

(l) Coloss. i. 15.

(m) St. John v. 26.

SERM. conceived by Mortals, but infinitely exceeding that, whereby any other Beings may be called the Sons of God.

OTHER Beings however are in a lower Sense said to be God's Sons, such as Angels and Men, not indeed by Generation, but Creation,--not by a Communication of Substance, but a Derivation of Existence.

THE former are thus named in several Places of the Book of *Job* (*n*), where they are described under the Title of the Sons of God, as coming to present themselves before the Lord at certain Seasons, in order to attend the Pleasure of his heavenly Majesty, and to give an Account of their Ministry, and as rejoicing at the Sight of this visible new-formed World, when *the Morning-stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy* (*o*).

THE latter are likewise honoured with the same Appellation both in the New Testament and the Old. *Adam* is expressly named *the Son of God* by the Evangelist St. *Luke* (*p*) on the Score of his Creation, and

(*n*) Job i. 6. and ii. 1.
(*p*) St. Luke iii. 38.

(*o*) Job xxxviii. 7.

and receiving Life immediately from the SERM.
Hands of his Maker, and all Mankind are V.
so denominated by the Prophet *Malachi* in
these Questions, which he asks, *Have we not*
all one Father? Hath not one God created
us? (q).

BUT neither in this Sense of the Words is it, that we are in the Passage before us pronounced to be the Sons of God. For as much as All, who are Partakers of human Nature, are in this Respect on the same Footing, equally God's Offspring in virtue of their being formed or created by him.

WHEREAS Christians, to whom our Apostle particularly addressees himself, are said here to be the Sons of God in Opposition to the rest of the World, and consequently the Name must be attributed to them in a more restrained Signification, derived, not so much from the Right of Creation, as of Adoption, which still is a Spiritual Creation, and much more valuable than the natural; and by Reason of their being admitted into a new Covenant of Grace with God, and regenerated, sanctified and led by his blessed Spirit.

M THAT

(9) Malachi ii. 10.

SERM.

V.

THAT this is the Truth of the Case before us, we have abundant Room to conclude from what is observable in the old Covenant. For if the People of *Israel* were entitled the Children of God on Account of the Covenant of the Law made with them and their Fathers, tho' it kept them, as it were, under Bondage, and treated them rather like Servants, than Sons: How much more justly may the Disciples of Jesus be so reputed under the more liberal Dispensation of the Gospel?

AND yet thus are the *Israelites* styled by *Moses* (r): *Ye are, says he, the Children of the Lord your God: For thou art an holy People unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar People unto himself, above all the Nations that are upon the Earth.* Now this was by no Means true in the Sense of their resembling him, and being dutiful to him, or holy by an inward real change of Mind and Disposition: For he himself elsewhere frequently affirms of the same People, that *they had corrupted themselves.---that they had forsaken God that made them, and lightly esteemed the*
Rock

(r) Deut. xiv. 1, 2.

Rock of their Salvation,---that *they provoked* SERM.
him to Jealousy with strange Gods, and the V.
 like to be met with in every Part of the Bible : And the many Instances there left on Record of their Disobedience and Idolatry are undeniable Proofs, that they could not be called God's Children, or deemed holy for the Sake of their internal Holiness, or Conversion from what they were by Nature to a god-like Temper of Soul and virtuous Practices ; but only in Regard of their being separated from the rest of Mankind by a sacred and divine Institution.

AND that *Moses's* Meaning is not to be any otherwise understood, his own Words plainly make appear : For on telling the Jews that they were *the Children of God and an holy People*, he adds by way of Explication, that the Lord had chosen them to be a peculiar People unto himself. When all the World besides had estranged themselves from God,---had forsaken his Worship, and retained not so much as the Knowledge of him in their Hearts, he made Choice of the Posterity of his Friend for the Sake of their Ancestor's singular Faith and Piety, and for other weighty Reasons best determined by his infinite Wisdom ; whom

SERM. he adopted for his Sons, and entered into
 V. such a League with them, as was most suitable to their Genius and Circumstances, and which was to last, till the appointed proper Season arrived for a better to take Place.

ACCORDINGLY, in due Time, a more excellent one did succeed; and though it was, for Causes, to be sure, sufficiently important, suspended and with-held from many Generations, yet *when the Fulness of Time was come*, St. Paul informs us, *God sent forth his Son made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we, i. e. the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, might, both by Faith in Christ Jesus, receive the Adoption of Sons (s).* That Apostle acknowledges, that *to the Israelites did once appertain the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants*, exclusive of all others (t). But now, says another, *to as many, as receive him*, be they Gentiles or Jews, *does he give the Power, and Right, to become the Sons of God (u).* All Mankind, ever since the Appearance of the Messiah, in whom were compleated God's great Designs for the Redemption of the World, are

(s) Gallat. iv. 4, 5.

(t) Rom. ix. 4.

(u) St. John i. 12,

are invited to enter into a more extensive, SERM.
 as well as spiritual Covenant,---into the new V.
 Covenant ratified by Jesus Christ, which
 gives them a present foederal Title to the
 Adoption of Sons.

THIS State however, of Dignity and Advantage, though we are introduced into it by the Favour of God and the Charity of Men, yet we cannot be kept in it by Compulsion, without our own voluntary Consent;---the Relation may be cancelled, as well as at first acquired; and to those alone is the Character of being the Sons of God continued, who on arriving at Years of Discretion, having been before bound by Covenant unto him, conscientiously attend to the Obligations they are brought under, and often solemnly renew them according to the established Form,---who are not only born of Water, and initiated into the Christian Church by Baptism, but born also of the Holy Ghost,---who are truly sanctified in the inner Man, ever freely led by the Impulses of divine Grace, obtained in the right Use of the Means thereof, and being enabled, are diligent to perform the Terms and Articles they stand engaged in. These are they, who shall be accounted worthy to possess the eternal In-

SERM. heritance of God's Children,---to enjoy the

V. Happiness of the World to come, and consequently may most truly be called the Sons of God, being the Sons of the Resurrection to everlasting Glory.

BUT waving the Privileges of the Sons of God in this Place, I shall proceed as I proposed, previously to consider the Duties incumbent on them, to which these Privileges are annexed.

AND here, as Christians are the Sons of God, not only by Creation, but Adoption, it is their principal Duty to attempt the nearest Imitation of their heavenly Father, that his infinite Superiority will admit of. If we are his Children, it is a laudable Ambition to aim at some Resemblance of him in all his communicable Perfections, and these are his moral Attributes of Justice, Truth, Goodness, Purity, the Display of which, and the like, is intended to be a Pattern for us to copy after, and in this Respect we are commanded to be *Followers of God as dear Children* (x). That a Son should be the very Image of his Father is commonly seen: It is natural for Children to be

(x) Ephes. v. 1.

be like their earthly Parents, as in Person, SERM.
 so in Behaviour; and our standing in that V.
 Relation to God, must call for our Like-
 ness of him in the one View, since there
 can be none in the other. So that we do
 very absurdly boast of our divine Original,
 whilst our Actions notoriously give the Lye
 to our Words.

PROFLIGATE Manners can only argue a
 Man to be of base Extraction: And what
 induced our Saviour to brand some of the
 Jews, who all prided themselves with the Title
 of the Sons of God,---with being in Reality
 the Children of the Devil, was their indulg-
 ing the Lusts in their Hearts, and tran-
 scribing in their Lives the Works, of such
 a Father. He rightly concluded, that a
 proud envious Temper, could be derived
 but from the Parent of Pride and Envy,
 and a malicious murdering Spirit from
 him alone, who *was a Murderer from the Be-
 ginning* (y).

As a Tree is known by its Fruits, so
 are the Sons of God by an holy Demean-
 our, consonant to that most honourable Pa-
 rentage. They who are sensible of the

M 4

Dignity

SERM. Dignity of their new Birth and of that divine Life, to which they are begotten again, will be very cautious, how they fashion themselves according to the Carriage of such, as are without God, or without just Notions of God, in the World,---as instead of recommending themselves to the Endearments of his Love by studying to resemble him, strive to provoke his Anger by engaging in those vile Courses, which are equally opposite to his Nature and his Will.

BUT his genuine Children, knowing their Duty, and fixing their Eyes *on the Rock from whence they were hewn* (z), will mind nothing so much, as how to shine in their native Brightness, and to behave in an harmless and itreproveable Manner, as the Sons of God without Rebuke. Their great Care will be to discharge their Obligations, in Kind, though not in Degree, arising from this their Lord's Command, *Be ye perfect, even as your Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect* (a). They will labour to adorn their Souls with the like spiritual Excellencies, though in a vastly inferior Measure,---they will conform their Ways, as much as may be, to the compleat Model placed before them.

As

(z) Isai. li. 1.

(a) St. Matth. v. 48.

SERM.

V.

As their infinite Father is absolutely righteous in all his Doings, and holy in all his Works, so will they in their Proportion be no Strangers to Righteousness and true Holiness;---as all his Proceedings are full of Judgment and Justice, and he is a God of Truth, and altogether free from Iniquity, so will they give earnest Heed to be strictly true and just both in their Speech and Dealings;---as he is perfectly good and gracious, exercising loving Kindness, and dispensing Mercy over all his Works, so will they studiously display a fervent, unfeigned, universal Charity, whilst they have Opportunity, doing Good unto all Men, and serving one another in Love;---and, in short, as far forth as they can discover, either by Reason or Revelation, the imitable Excellencies of the God and Father of all, which may never so faintly be copied out by them, will they use all Diligence to draw them forth in their Manners and Behaviour, as becomes affectionate and obedient Children.

AND as the Sons of God must follow his Example dutifully, so must they submit to his Dispensations patiently; nay, whatever Afflictions he is pleased to visit them with,

SERM. with, it behoves them to bear all, not only
 V. with Calmness and Resignation, but with
 ~~~~~ Cheerfulness and Joy; knowing this, that  
 worldly Calamities are the sure Marks of  
 God's paternal Regard,---that *whom the Lord  
 loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son,  
 whom he receiveth (b). He correcteth him,  
 as a Father the Son in whom he delight-  
 eth (c).* But that if any one is *without  
 Chastisement, whereof all are Partakers, then  
 is he a Bastard,---treated as one, and not a  
 Son (d).*

THE Reason, which the wise Man urges,  
 why a prudent Father should chasten his  
 Son betimes, holds good in Application to  
 the oldest of God's Children; *Foolishness is  
 bound in the Heart of every one of us, but  
 the Rod and Reproof give Wisdom (e).* We  
 have all of us Faults to be amended, Vir-  
 tues to be improved; and it is in the Fur-  
 nace of Adversity, that we are refined  
 and purified,---it is in the School of Disci-  
 pline that we must be taught our Duty.

GOD afflicteth not willingly, nor griev-  
 eth his Children among Men, but for some  
 substantial

(b) Heb. xii. 6.

(c) Prov. iii. 12.

(d) Heb. xii. 8.

(e) Prov. xxix. 15.

substantial Cause: Natural Evils are inflicted SERM.  
 in order to produce moral Good. If then V.  
*we have had Fathers of our Flesh, who cor-  
 rected us, and we gave them Reverence; shall  
 we not much rather be in Subjection to the  
 Father of Spirits and live? For they verily for  
 a few Days chastened us, as seemed good unto  
 them; but he for our Profit, that we might  
 be Partakers of his Holiness (f)---*our natural  
 Parents have chastised us according to their  
 Humours and Passions, and with a View,  
 for the most Part, to our civil Conduct,  
 and for the Furtherance of our Welfare in  
 this Life. Whereas our Divine Parent lays  
 his correcting Hand on us soley for our  
 spiritual and eternal Benefit; that he may re-  
 store his sacred Image within us, defaced by  
 Ungodliness,---may make us to resemble  
 him in Purity, and thereby qualify us to  
 participate with him in Blessedness.

AND shall we, as too many do (such is their  
 Impatience!) murmur and repine at God's fa-  
 therly Severities? Shall we fly in the Face  
 of Providence, if every thing goes not on a  
 easy and smooth with us? Shall we both  
 receive Good at God's Hand unthankfully,  
 and Evil discontentedly? Or shall we pre-  
 sently

(f) Heb. xii. 9, 10.

SERM. sently be upon the Fret, and complain of  
 V. injurious Treatment on meeting with a reasonable Check in our wild and perhaps otherwise ruinous Career?

THOUGH *no Chastening seemeth to be in the Hour of Suffering, joyous, but grievous: Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (f).* The Sons of God know it their Duty and their Interest to bear all Things with a pious Submission;--- they are persuaded to think, that God's *Judgments are right, and that in very Faithfulness, in pure Compassion, he hath afflicted them (g),* to wean them from the dangerous Pleasures of Sense, with which they are too much inclined to be captivated, and to raise their Affections to heavenly Objects, which they are as prone to overlook in a Crowd of earthly Enjoyments.

As long as every Thing goes well with us, and all our Projects succeed to the Height of our Expectations, and we feel the full Satisfaction of a most prosperous Life, we fancy it is good for us to be here, and concern ourselves but little, too little, in making

(f) Heb. xii. 11.

(g) Ps. cxix. 75.



ing Provision for a comfortable Futurity. SERM.

Is this the Folly and Inconsiderateness of V.

of God's most dutiful Children? And must he not presume to reprove them, and set before them their Faults and their Danger? Let us not be so much Children in Understanding, as to lament, where we ought to rejoice. If our Almighty Father lessens our Store, or embitters our Cup, he does it, because he sees the one is so palatable, as to tempt us to too large Draughts, the other so plentiful, as to excite a Confidence in uncertain Riches, rather than in the living God. And if he throws Rubs in our Way, it is to divert us from the wrong Course we are running, and to recall us to himself.

GOD is the best Judge, what Corrections are necessary for Man; and, as we are sure, he will load us with no Burdens, but for our Advantage, it is our Part to bear, what he puts upon us, with a serene and cheerful Mind,---to behave under Chastisement with that Resignation, which a Sense of our ill Desert should inspire,---to let no Sufferings abate our Love to God, which are Proofs of his Love to us,---nor to be dejected in Spirit for the Sake of any bodily Evils;

SERM. Evils ; but to sooth our troubled Hearts with  
 V. this Consideration, that *when we are judged,*  
*we are chastened of the Lord, that we should*  
*not be condemned with the World (b).* And that  
 in the calmest Times and most favourable  
 Circumstances, *it is through much Tribulation*  
*we must enter into the Kingdom of God (i).*

PATIENCE and even Thankfulness  
 being then the Expression of a right Tem-  
 per in God's Children under his Disci-  
 pline, Contentment and Satisfaction certainly  
 suits them best under his Indulgence. There  
 is no one, who does not find some Blessings  
 in Life amidst the Troubles of it, and with  
 these, be they many or few, ought every  
 Christian to be easy ; as they are not strictly  
 his Portion, but Accommodations only on  
 the Road to an endless Possession: To secure  
 which is his chief Business, and should be his  
 main Care.

LET them be over fond of, and intent  
 about, worldly Enjoyments, whose Tastes and  
 Aims, Hopes and Expectations rise no higher.  
 But let the Sons of God regard this Earth,  
 as a Wilderness to be travelled through,  
 before they can reach the Confines of their  
 promised

(b) 1 Cor. xi. 32.

(i) Acts xiv. 22.

promised Land: And if they may meet SERM.  
 with tolerable Conveniencies to subsist them V.  
 in their Passage, they need not desire more;  
 more would be rather hurtful than useful,---  
 would serve only to detain or incumber  
 them,---to entice them out of their right  
 Way, or retard their Progress in it.

WHAT is really beneficial for his Children,  
 as their heavenly Father most clearly dis-  
 cerns, so will he most tenderly provide. The  
 Consideration of his infinite Power and  
 Goodness will effectually prevent all doubt-  
 ful Misgivings within them. And so long  
 as we may securely depend on obtaining  
 what is needful, and very often observe,  
 that much more is bestowed than bare Ne-  
 cessaries, it is absurd, as well as sinful to em-  
 ploy all our Thoughts and our Days on  
 the perishing Goods of this Life to the  
 shameful Neglect of what has an abundantly  
 better Right to our warmest Applica-  
 tion,---of such Goods, as shall remain for  
 ever.

THESE are the peculiar Duties of the  
 Sons of God, which most of all distinguish  
 them from the Children of this World and  
 of the Evil One.

AND



SERM.

V.

AND to encourage us in a Behaviour in all Points answering to so glorious a Title, I go on to observe the Privileges annexed to it.

THE first, in Order of Time and worth of our Notice, is, that on our being made God's adopted Sons, and received into the Covenant of Grace by Baptism, we obtain the Pardon of all our Sins, and being purged from them *we are washed, we are sanctified in the Name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (k)*. Through the Laver of Regeneration we are translated from our natural State of Enmity with God to a spiritual State of Favour and Reconciliation with him,---we, *who were afar off, are brought nigh and accepted in the Beloved (l)*,---are admitted into his Family, and treated as his Children.

BUT in this Affair it imports us, as much as the Value of the Privilege amounts to, to be convinced, that this Mercy of Adoption is not absolute, but conditional: For although the Grant be made, and the Contract executed on God's Part, yet is it without saving Effects on ours, unless we perform

(k) 1 Cor. vi. 11.

(l) Ephes. i. 6, ii. 13.

perform the appointed Conditions of Faith SERM.  
 and Repentance, as far forth as we are ca- V.  
 pable of performing them. God, as he has  
 made us, is ever ready to continue us Heirs  
 to Salvation; however we may disinherit  
 our selves: And we certainly forfeit our  
 Title, if we do not fulfil the Terms, on  
 which it is founded. They are, according  
 to the Gospel-charter (and by no other can  
 we safely form our Judgments, or square our  
 Actions) a right Belief of God's sacred  
 Word, and a penitent Renunciation of every  
 evil Work.

BUT should any Man set up other Evi-  
 dences of Adoption, and amuse his Fancy  
 with the Assurance of Forgiveness and Ac-  
 ceptance on imaginary Terms of his own  
 framing, and not on a faithful Heart and  
 an exemplary Life, by the one to satisfy  
 the World, by the other himself, he is blind  
 in spite of his bold Pretensions to new  
 Lights, and knows nothing of his Situation  
 with a View to the Divine Favour, as he  
 ought to know. To prove, that we enjoy  
 the Sanctification of the Spirit, whereby *we*  
*cry, Abba, Father* (*m*) we must bring forth  
 his proper Fruits, which are the Graces and

N<sub>2</sub>

Virtues

SERM. Virtues of an holy Life: On these alone can

V. we raise a well-grounded Hope, that God will for Christ's Sake forgive us all, that is past; and it is the good Christian's singular Prerogative to have by special Covenant a Right to Sonship on these Conditions, tho' not through any Merit of his own Performances, but through the all-sufficient Merits of a crucified Redeemer.

WHILST the rest of the World, who are not buried with Christ by Baptism into Death, remain as Aliens and Strangers in their original forlorn Separation from God, are neither his adopted Children, nor the living Members of his Household, but must be left wholly to his uncovenanted Mercy. And should they discover, as they may, from the most obvious Notions of the Divine Attributes afforded them by the Dawnings of Reason, that they shall receive no unjust, or unequal Treatment from God, it being the Dictate of Nature, that *the Judge of all the Earth shall do right*; still what solid Comfort can this yield them? When they are at the same Time conscious of many aggravated Offences, for which the Wrath of God is due, and the severest of his Vengeance may be poured out: Nor are they apprized



apprized of any sure Method to reconcile SERM.  
 their enraged Maker, and stay his uplifted V.  
 Arm. ~~~~~

THIS must be the deplorable Case of such, as being Strangers to the Covenants and the Promises, either carelessly neglect, or perversely refuse to bear a true Faith, and stipulate a suitable Obedience unto God,---either know nothing of the Conditions, or disdain to close with them, on which he has pronounced himself ready to be appeased, and willing to readmit Sinners to Mercy? And yet these Men must be sadly sensible, on a very slight Reflection, that they are not without Transgression,---that they have not always, and in all Things walked according to the Light, they had, and discharged the Obligations, they found themselves under.

OR granting, that they were inclined to Repentance and Submission; yet if they presumed on their own Works, rather than threw themselves on God's Mercy through Christ,---if they trusted in their own Expressions of Duty without suing out their Pardon in the established Form, instead of pacifying and making God their Friend, they

SERM. would but exasperate him to become more  
 V. their Enemy. For a Sinner cannot demand,  
 nor deserve Forgiveness: It is the free Act  
 of the Divine Bounty; the Deity alone is the  
 Dispenser of it, and Man the Receiver:  
 Shall we then dare to prescribe Articles to  
 him, and scorn to be forgiven but in our  
 own Way?

It is in and through Baptism, as the  
 stated Channel and Instrument of Convey-  
 ance, that we must look to meet with Re-  
 mission of Sins; this is the Deed, whereon  
 is grounded our Christian Claim to it, and  
 in which, as in a Contract, a Title is made  
 over to us in this first Step to God's Fa-  
 vour, the sure Pledge of all his other Blef-  
 sings, if no Obstacle intervene on our Side.  
 And this being the Purport of the new Co-  
 venant according to the express Words of  
 holy Scripture, *Repent and be baptized every*  
*one of you in the Name of the Lord Jesus*  
*Christ, for the Remission of Sins* (n), and  
*arise and be baptized, and wash away thy*  
*Sins* (o). It undeniably follows, that the  
 Sons of God, and none but they, who are  
 made so by the washing of Regeneration, have  
 a confirmed Right to this Privilege of Pardon.

WHAT-

(n) Acts ii. 38.

(o) Acts xxii. 16.

SERM.

V.

WHATEVER others may find, or any charitably think, that they shall find, it is what none can with a fulness of Assurance promise them, nor can they confidently promise it to themselves. And the Situation of those, who are begotten again to a lively Hope, is as much better than theirs, who are left to their doubtful Surmifings, as the highest Certainty in the most momentous Affair is preferable to a bare Possibility of Success.

BUT we must, after all, distinguish between such as are now under an unavoidable Necessity of being excluded from the Family of God, and such as prophanelly despise the Privilege of being his adopted Sons. The Case of the first is truly compassionate, and tho' they have no formal Grant of Pardon made over to them, yet do they seem to be fit Objects of that unbounded Mercy, which is over all God's Works. However the last can have no Pretence to that Favour, which they rudely push from them, when offered, and, instead of seeking to be justified in God's Way, persist in the most barefaced Opposition to it, and in doing *Despite to the Spirit of Grace* (p).

N 3

THIS

(p) Heb. x. 29.



SERM.

V.

THIS carries us on to another Privilege of the Sons of God : Who, as they are born not only of Water, but also of the Spirit, have a new Principle of Holiness infused into them,---have Nourishment supplied for their spiritual Growth,---are *transformed by the renewing of their Minds* (q),---and are empowered, if they are not miserably deficient in their Endeavours, to continue blameless unto the End, and advance to Manhood in that filial State, into which they are afresh born.

THEY are sanctified through the Holy Ghost at first more imperfectly by the Baptismal Consecration, and afterwards more compleatly by a vital proper Holiness. He is their Guide and their Instructor, their Comforter and their Perfecter ; he leads them into all Truth, not by affording any new Inspirations, but by enlightening their Minds to know and embrace the old, the written Dictates of the Divine Will *once delivered to the Saints* (r), and he enables them to obey the Truth, not by any forcible Impulses, which may be felt, but by an Operation gentle and imperceivable ; though very manifest in the Effects ; when the Children of God

(q) Rom. xii 2.

(r) St. Jude iii.

God produce *the Fruit of the Spirit in all* SERM.  
*Goodness, and Righteousness, and Truth (s),* V.  
 when through the Influence of the same blef-  
*sed Spirit they abound in Hope, and are filled*  
*with all Joy and Peace in believing (t),---*  
*are strengthened with Might in the inner*  
*Man, and are rooted and grounded in Love (u).*

THESE Scripture-expressions however ought to be understood in a qualified Sense, lest they should incline to that delusive Enthusiasm, which sober Reason abhors, or to that secure Presumption, which true Religion condemns. It is a dreadful Mistake; to think, that the Holy Spirit acts in, and with the Faithful by an impetuous and all-commanding Violence, or that he doth all those great Things for the Sons of God by vehemently overbearing their Choice and Judgment. He leads, but he does not drive; they are at Liberty to follow him in the direct Path to Glory, or to withdraw from under his Guidance, and relinquish their own Happiness: And this is too often the Event, in some for a Time, in others for ever.

N 4

THAT

(s) Ephes. v. 9.

(t) Rom. xv. 13.

(u) Ephes. iii. 15, 17.

SERM.

V.

THAT the Regenerate should be liable frequently to transgress, is by no Means strange during the present Season of their Trial: For without such a Power, where would their Probation be? But it is their further Privilege not to be immediately lost, as soon as they go astray: They are sought after like wandering Sheep by their Shepherd,---are invited and assisted to come back into the Fold,---are kindly received on their Repentance and Amendment,---and have an Atonement always ready to be applied on the Return to their Duty; which they never fail of finding, if they are careful to look for it in the appointed Place and Manner, *i. e.* if they prepare themselves to feast on Christ's Merits in one Sacrament, as they have been cloathed with them in the other, and spiritually *eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood* (x), thereby partaking of the excellent Fruits and Benefits of his Sacrifice: For then they have *eternal Life*, and he *will raise them up at the last Day* (y).

THE Sons of God are not only *baptized into one Body*, but are made to drink into one

(x) St. John vi. 53.

(y) V. 54.



*one Spirit* (z), they have *the Promise of the* SERM.  
*Father* (a), the Presence of the Holy Ghost V.  
always willing to help them in their Con-  
version: Who, though he suspends his Influ-  
ence, where he perceives them basely per-  
sisting in their Pollutions, yet he moves their  
relenting Hearts to Reformation,---infuses  
penitent Thoughts,----excites them to Hu-  
militaion,---gives Strength to their Contri-  
tion,---revives their Faith, and fixes their Pur-  
pose of stricter Obedience,---nor does he give  
them over to a reprobate Mind, ever after  
repeated Relapses; as long as there is any  
Prospect of their Recovery: But he pities  
them, when he cannot delight in them. And  
if being escaped out of the Snare of the  
Devil, they do not fall back again, and  
grieve him anew, he vouchsafes to take up  
his settled Residence within them, makes them  
his Temple, and conducts them safe through  
a World of Temptations.

THESE are the most valuable Privileges of  
the Sons of God in this Life: Towards the  
Attainment whereof they have their Saviour  
to plead on their Behalf, as a most prevail-  
ing Advocate in Heaven, and the Blessed  
Spirit to enable them, as a most powerful  
Assistant,

(z) 1 Cor. xii 13.

(a) St. Luke xxiv. 49.

SERM. Assistant, to petition for themselves on Earth.

VI

That Divine Person intercedes for them, and this teaches them what to ask, and how to pray, and qualifies them to offer up in an acceptable manner that spiritual Sacrifice of Devotion, which is no less their Privilege than their Duty.

AND an high Honour must it be, for sinful Dust and Ashes to maintain a Correspondence with Heaven, and carry on an Intercourse with our Maker,---though present in the Body, not to be altogether absent from the Lord in Spirit, and to enjoy his gracious Presence in this Life, till they shall be introduced into his glorious Presence into the next.

NEITHER is it more honourable than beneficial for them to have an easy and free Access to their heavenly Father, and an Assurance, that their Addresses will be kindly received by him,---an Assurance, that the very Things they ask, or in lieu of them such Advantages of Mind and Body, as infinite Wisdom sees much more convenient for them, will be bestowed, founded on this express Promise of their dear Redeemer, *Ask and ye shall receive: For if ye being*

*being evil, know, how to give good Gifts* SERM.  
*unto your Children, how much more shall your* V.  
*heavenly Father give good Things, and even*  
*his holy Spirit, to them that ask him? (b).*

BUT how valuable soever the Privileges are, which the Sons of God have in Possession, yet they fall far short in Value of those, to which they have a Reversionary Title.

ALTHOUGH, as the natural Descendants of Adam, the Sentence of Mortality passed upon him, *Dust thou art, and to Dust shall thou return (c)*, must extend to them, *for that all have sinned (d)*. Yet short is the Enemies Triumph;---the Conqueror himself must be ere long conquered; the Children of God are the Children of the Resurrection;---and *now is Christ risen from the Dead, and become the First-fruits of them that slept (e)*.

WHEN Christ, who is their Head, and Life shall appear, then shall also his living Members, the blessed Children of his Father, appear with him in Glory (f). When the meek Saviour shall put on the awful Majesty  
of

(b) St. Matth. vii. 11. St. Luke xi. 13.

(c) Gen. iii. 19.

(d) Rom. v. 12.

(e) 1 Cor. xv. 20.

(f) Coloss. iii. 4.



188      SERMONS *on several*

SERM. of the Judge, and come to render to every  
 V. one according to his Works, God's adopted  
 ~~~~~ Sons shall be transformed into his Like-  
 nefs: When our Lord Jesus shall descend
 from Heaven, and the last Trump shall
 awake the Dead, *He shall change our vile
 Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his
 glorious Body, according to the mighty work-
 ing, whereby he is able even to subdue all
 Things to himself (g).* What is sown in
Corruption, shall then be raised in Incorruption,
what is sown in Dishonour shall be
raised in Glory, what is sown in Weakness
shall be raised in Power, what is sown a
natural Body shall be raised a spiritual
Body (b). And when the Bodies of the
 righteous Children of God shall be thus raised
 in perfect Beauty, they shall be no more
 liable to Want or Decay; but shall subsist
 without the Help of Food or Nourishment,
 or any Tendency to a further Dissolution,--
 they shall be no more subject to Weakness,
 Pain or Grief; but be made impassible of Evil,
 and adorned with a never-fading Health,
 Strength and Brightness.

THEY, who have undergone a spiritual
 Resurrection, and are risen from the Death
 of

(g) Phil. iii. 21.

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

of Sin unto a Life of Righteousness, are sure SERM.
 of enjoying a real Resurrection to a Life eter- V.
 nal. For if they are the Children of God, then
 are they *Heirs, Heirs of God and Joint-heirs*
with Christ (i), and if the Spirit of him,
that raised up Jesus from the Dead, dwell in
you, he, that raised Christ from the Dead, shall
also quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit,
that dwelleth in you (k), When therefore
this Corruptible shall have put on Incorrupt-
tion, and this Mortal shall have put on Im-
mortality, then shall be brought to pass the
Saying, that is written, Death is swallowed
up in Victory (l).

FROM thenceforth they shall be *as the An-*
gels which are in Heaven, as eternally blessed
and glorious (m). The Inheritance, which
is reserved for them, is incorruptible and
undefiled, and such as fadeth not away (n),
and if our earthly House were dissolved, we
have a Building of God, an House not made
with Hands, eternal in the Heavens (o).

THIS is the *Manifestation of the Sons of*
God, which the earnest Expectation of the
Creature waiteth for (p) ;---this is an Ad-
 vancement

(i) Rom. viii. 17.

(l) 1 Cor. xv. 54.

(n) 1 St. Pet. i. 4.

(p) Rom. viii. 19.

(k) V. 11.

(m) St. Matth. xxii. 30.

(o) 2 Cor. v. 1.

SERM. vancement in Honour and Dignity, becoming
 V. the Relation they stand in to their infinite Saviour, who condescends to call them Brethren;-- this is a State so blisful and excellent, that nothing can be desired beyond it. For what can exceed Perfection?---This is Life indeed to live for ever;---this is truly Happiness, which is absolute in Kind and endless in Duration, what is superior to the Views of the most Ambitious, beyond the Deserts of the most Pious, and altogether worthy of the Almighty Donor of it.

BUT since our Apostle informs us, that *it doth not yet appear what we shall be*, let us not debase, by attempting to describe, the Glories, which we can now have no adequate Idea of. The Bliss of Heaven is as far removed from our Conception, as from our Possession in this State of Darknes and Misery; and we may safely leave the Nature and the Degrees of it with God, being humbly content with knowing the Certainty of it. We are assured of all the Blessedness which an immensely good Being can bestow;---we shall be like him in Happiness, if we study to be like him in Holiness;---*we shall see him as he is*, and what we see, we shall enjoy of him;---we shall be admitted to the most intimate Vision
 of

of him, which our refined Faculties will be SERM.
 able to bear ;--and be advanc'd to contemplate, V.
 serve, and adore the Father of Spirits in his
 immediate *Presence*, where is *Fulness of Joy*,
and at whose Right Hand are Pleasures for
evermore (q).

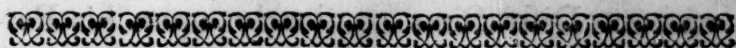
AND what can we desire further? Will not the most exalted, the most compleat, the most durable Felicity satisfy us? Too many, it is plain, take up with infinitely less; those, I mean, who place their supream Delight in temporal Enjoyments. But we are the Children, not of this World, but of God, settled here for a Time, as it were, in order to our Education; that we may be trained up through Virtue to Glory. It is our Part, therefore to make the necessary Improvements, that when we are ordered home to our Father's House, we may not appear in all Respects unworthy of our Birth or our Inheritance; and in the mean while, to learn the right Use of our Apostle's Doctrine from his own Words in the Verse following the Text, *And every Man, that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure*: Which may our heavenly Father enable us all to do by the Aid of his Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ our Lord.

S E R M O N

(q) Pf. xvi. 11.



S E R M O N VI.



St. Matth. vi. 33.

*But seek ye first the Kingdom of
God and his Righteousness, and
all these Things shall be added
unto you.*



THESE Words may be supposed to concern either only Christ's first and immediate Followers, or else his Disciples at large.

SERM.
VI.

If the Precept be confined to the former, the Promise, subjoined to encourage them in discharging it, may well be understood in the most extensive Sense, as authorizing the Apostles and Planters of the Gospel to depend absolutely on their divine Master's Care to provide them with all bodily Necessaries, either through a miraculous Power exerted visibly by himself,

O

or

SERM. or by a gracious Interposition, operating secretly on the Affections of their Hearers
VI. to support them: That they might not be of doubtful Mind about their Subsistence in the World, nor spend their Days in labouring for the Meat that perisheth, but attend without Distraction constantly upon his Person, and wholly dedicate their Thoughts and their Time to that Work of the Ministry, unto which he had called them. The Precept taken in this Light cannot be looked on as a general Rule for all Christians to observe, but calculated only for the first Believers, and to have ceased long since to be obligatory.

BUT if the Direction in the Text be extended, as it fairly may, to the whole Body of the Faithful, then in Proportion as we enlarge this, we must contract the Encouragement, by which it is enforced, and limit it to the Use of our own Endeavours under the Influence of God's providential Government. To whom, after doing our Part, we must entirely leave the Issue of our Affairs, and strictly avoid all Anxiety and Hurry of Thought, which too many are apt to be possessed with on Account of the good Things of this Life to the Prejudice of those of a better.

Therefore,

SERM.

VI.

Therefore, as our infallible Teacher sums up his Argument, take no Thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth, that ye have Need of all these Things: Let not these worldly Goods be always uppermost in your Minds,-----let them not be your chiefest Concern, nor the principal Objects of your Affection. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.

HERE we have the religious Improvement, our Saviour Christ builds on the premised Doctrine of an universal Providence; and, as he enters deep into the Subject, we must necessarily suppose it to be a Matter of the greatest Weight, and be persuaded, that what he thought deserving of his highest Attention, does likewise demand ours; this obliges us in Point of Reason to search and look into his Meaning: And as all his Instructions were ordered with a View to our Advantage, Interest pushes us on to the Enquiry: And since his Advice carries with it the Force of a Command, a Sense of Duty also engages us to make it in the best manner we can.

O 2

By

SERM.

VI.

By these Motives let us be urged to consider, what we are to understand by the *Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*,---what it is to seek these, and why we are to make the seeking of them *our first Work*.

THE Kingdom of God has diverse Acceptations in his holy Word. It signifies either his natural, or his moral Dominion, and, taken in the former Light, includes under it the whole Creation inanimate and animate, irrational and rational : This is that Kingdom, which ruleth over all, and to the Laws of which all Creatures must be subservient.

BUT besides this absolute Government of universal Nature, there is also a moral Kingdom established by God, and conducted not by irresistible Power, but by equitable Commands, and the influencing Motives of Rewards and Punishments. This Empire has for its Subjects none but rational and free Creatures, and they for the Measure of their Subjection the original and unalterable Laws of eternal Reason, which flow from their very Constitutions, and are founded on the fixed Relation, they bear to their great Author and one another. And though they
are

are not necessitated to obey those Laws, which if they were, it must destroy their Natures, and make them different Beings from what they are, yet they are as strictly bound to obey them, as if they could not transgress them, and if they prove Rebels by an Abuse of their Liberty, will be sadly accountable to their supreme Lord and Potentate.

SERM.

VI.

NOT, that every Transgression becomes alike fatal to the Offenders,----what was denied to the higher Rank of Criminals, is yet indulged to the lower,----there is Mercy in Store, tho' not for fallen Angels, however for fallen Men; these are permitted and assisted to recover themselves, nor are ever looked upon as Reprobates, so long as they offend through a pitiable Weakness, and not through inveterate Malice, like the Devil and his Associates.

FROM hence we have a Prospect of another of God's Kingdoms, even that of *Grace*, which is the settled Order of his Government under the Gospel-state, and this, if it was not erected, was promised presently after Man had rebelled against the moral Dominion of his Maker: It has the Dispen-

198 S E R M O N S *on several*

SERM. fation of *Moses* to prepare its Way, and
 VI. usher it into the World, and was compleat-
 ly founded by the Appearance of the Son
 of God in the Flesh.

WHEN Mankind had withdrawn from their Allegiance to God, and had felt the Folly, and the Misery of affecting to be independent of him, a new Scheme of governing, and a new Set of Laws were requisite to reduce the Traitors to, and keep them in their Duty, not indeed to abolish the old, but to improve it,---not to lessen the Obligation of moral Virtue, but to perfect it, by making them to stand in a new Relation to him, as redeemed by his Mercy, as well as created by his Power.

WHILST a sinful World continued under, as it had justly incurred, the Displeasure of the Almighty, what could remain for them in these Circumstances, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment? And what was there to brighten the Prospect? Till the Introduction of a better Hope by Christ Jesus encouraged them to expect a far milder Treatment than they deserved, till a general Pardon was proclaimed and a Form of obtaining it by the Sacrament of Baptism appointed, on
 the

the easy Condition of a penitent Faith : So SERM.
 that *there is now no Condemnation to them* VI.
that are in Christ Jesus (a),---to them, who
 being admitted to a Share of the Reconciliation he purchased with his Blood, behave like loyal Subjects, and do not madly forfeit the Allegiance, wherewith they are bound.

OF this excellent Society consists the *Kingdom of Grace* ; to which all were invited to submit themselves. And to bring the whole Race of Sinners into it, and to instruct them, how to live under it so, as to preserve a just Title to its Privileges, is the Substance of the Doctrine published by our blessed Lord, and delivered down in the Gospel.

BEFORE the Son of God appeared in the Likeness of Men, and declared himself to be the supreme Head and Governor of this Kingdom, which is his Church, in Conjunction with the Father ; God's special Dominion was exercised over one Family and Nation only : But the Ends and Purposes of of the Jewish Œconomy being answered, the middle Wall of Partition was broken
 O 4 down,

(a) Rom. viii. 1.

SERM. down, and the *Kingdoms of the World became*

VI. *the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ (b),*

according to the Prophecies concerning the Reign of the Messiah, that *there should come forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, which should stand for an Ensign of the People; to it should the Gentiles seek, and his Rest should be glorious (c),* and the Completion of them began then to take Place, when our Saviour said, *The Law and the Prophets were until John, but since that Time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every Man presseth into it (d);* the legal Dispensation is now drawing to an End, the Gospel is promulgated, and free to be embraced by all Men; those, who were afar off, are brought nigh, and made the People of God, though before the Subjects of the Prince of Darkness,----and when he attested to the Jews, *Behold the Kingdom of God is within, or among you (e)* and threatened them for their Contempt of him and his Gospel, *that the Kingdom shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof (f).*

IT

(b) Rev. xi. 15.

(c) Isai. xi. 1, 10.

(d) St. Luke xvi. 16.

(e) St. Luke xvii. 21.

(f) St. Matth. xxi. 43.

SERM.

VI.

IT is this Kingdom, which St. Paul tells the Romans (g), is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost,---it is neither God's natural, nor his moral, nor his political, but his spiritual Kingdom, where he reigns in the Hearts of the Faithful by his Word and Spirit, and conducts them by the Means of his Grace to the Hopes and Fruition of Glory ;---this is also frequently called in holy Scripture, *the Kingdom of Heaven*, as well because the divine Founder of it came down from Heaven, as because it leads all his true Members to Heaven, emphatically called *the Kingdom of Glory*, though in reality the Kingdoms of Grace and Glory are one and the same Constitutions, only composed of different Parts, having Grace for its Way, and Glory for its End.

BUT if we consider them more distinctly, we shall find the former to consist of Duty and Labour, the latter of Honour and Reward ; the former may be accounted God's Kingdom in its Minority, growing towards Perfection, and the latter by the Wisdom of Counsel and Action arriv'd at its Meridian

(g) Rom. xiv. 17.

SERM. dian of Brightness; the former is like a

VI.

Nation labouring and struggling with the Miseries and Desolations of War, harrassed at home with Insurrections, threatened from abroad with Invasions, where without are Frightnings, within are Fears: But when these Contests and Convulsions are over, and all Enemies, both foreign and domestick are subdued, then appears the latter in all its Glory; Peace and Society succeed, Crowns of Victory are worn, and eternal Triumphs are celebrated in the Regions of Bliss. Then shall God's glorious Kingdom be display'd in its utmost Lustre, into which all good Men, all, who are cloathed with *the Righteousness of the Saints* (b), shall gain Admittance, shall enjoy perpetual Rest and Felicity, and reign with God their Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, for ever and ever.

Thus says the Almighty Conqueror, who has the Keys of Hell and of Death, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in the Throne* (i), but to all the Workers of Iniquity, he says, *There shall be Weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets*

(b) Rev. xix. 8,

(i) Rev. iii. 21.

Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and your selves SERM.
thrust out (k). VI.

AND here we have a View of that Kingdom of God, which is principally intended in the Text, and is the State of Happiness inconceivable and everlasting reserved for the Righteous in Heaven, the Seat of God's infinite Majesty and Glory, where such, as shall be found worthy of it, shall partake of the utmost Degrees of Blessedness, as immense and inexhaustable, as the Fountain they flow from, even the Divine Power and Goodness.

Now the certain Road to this Kingdom of Glory lies through this Righteousness, and none but the Righteous shall enter into it: Hence arises the Usefulness of an Enquiry into the Meaning of *his Righteousness*, lest by mistaking our Way, we never finish our Journey beneficially, nor arrive at the blissful Regions of Eternity.

It is observable, that what we are called upon to seek in this Respect, is not our own Righteousness, but God's; that Righteousness, which he has demanded by Precept, and enforced by Example; and hereby we are to understand, not a moral, nor a legal, but an Evangelical Righteousness, a zealous

(k) St. Luke xiii. 28.

SERM. zealous and hearty Attachment to the Doctrines
VI. and Duties of the Gospel in their genuine
Sense and utmost Extent. The Laws of
God's Kingdom, under which we live, are
the Laws of Christ, and not those of *Moses*,
or of Nature; and the Conduct of its Sub-
jects must be regulated by the Christian Re-
ligion, as it stands distinguished from the
Natural and the Jewish.

THE latter, indeed, however eagerly con-
tended for through the strong Prejudices of
Education in the Infancy of Christianity,
has been entirely given up for many Ages
by all, except a small Remnant of the an-
tient Jews, who remain as a standing Evi-
dence of the Truth of the Gospel.

BUT the former, that is Natural Reli-
gion, finds many Advocates, and under that
Cloak do Infidels generally shelter them-
selves: All the Righteousness they seek, is
only the Righteousness of Heathens, and
they prefer the Dawn of Reason, before the
Sunshine of Revelation. They boldly claim
it as the original Privilege of their Being,
to chuse their own Method of Salvation,---
presume to dictate to their Maker, and expect
to be admitted to Mercy on such Terms, as
they think fit to mark out to themselves.

THUS

THUS do these Sons of Reason act most unreasonably, and justly forfeit that Title, they so much glory in: For the Point may be left to themselves to determine, which is most agreeable to right Reason, to pay the greater Regard to the Divine Attributes, or to their own doubtful Surmifings, and whether they ought to prescribe Times and Seasons to their Maker, or receive Laws from him. If God be infinitely wise, and good, and true, it must surely become us to acquiesce in all his Dispensations, and perform his Will according to that Increase of Light, which he has been pleased gradually to throw in upon us. If his unerring Providence did not see fit to discover his whole Council concerning Mankind to the Gentiles of old, who lived before Christ came into the World, they are to be pitied for the Knowledge they wanted, and commended for making some Use of what they enjoyed, in labouring, though ineffectually, to recover human Nature out of the ruinous State, into which it was sunk.

BUT their Misfortune would be our Fault; that Ignorance and Corruption, which might once be winked at, would now wear a very criminal

SERM. criminal Face amidst the Opportunities of

VI. gaining so much more Knowledge and Purity: Our Obligations must increase with our Abilities;---and that Measure of Righteousness, which God may be satisfied with in a State of Nature, cannot answer his just Expectations in a State of Grace. There is not the same Reason for it, and this therefore is the Condemnation of such, as pretend to govern themselves by the Lessons of Morality, that *Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darknefs better than Light, because their Deeds are evil* (1). Could Man's Understanding, uninformed, furnish out a perfect Scheme of Duty, or his Will, unaided, carry it thoroughly into Execution, such Self-sufficiency might be allowed superior to any foreign Helps, but, when this appears far from having been the Condition of the wisest and best of Men,---that Reason and Nature can go very little Way towards discovering and performing religious Obligations, witness the Philosophers of old, who were quite at a Loss for a regular Plan of them, and differed as much among themselves, as they do from us; must it not then be very surprising, that any who live where the pure Gospel is laid before them, and is continually

(1) St. John iii. 19,

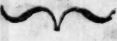
continually sounding in their Ears, should yet go about to establish their own Righteousness, and not submit unto God's? SERM. VI.

WERE their moral Attainments as excellent, as they boast them to be, still they must be as unprofitable to themselves, as to God, and no just Grounds of claiming a Title to his Favours. And if their very Virtues are imperfect, what shall be said of their Vices? What can they plead to extenuate their Transgressions? Here they are perfectly benighted, and are tossed on the boundless Ocean of Uncertainty, unless Revelation clears up the Prospect, God's Word directs their Course, and his Spirit fills their Sails, and so at last they are brought safe into the Haven of Rest, *which remains for the People of God (m).*

IN short, *Other Foundation can no Man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus (n).* This being God's Ground-work, standeth sure, and whoever erecteth his System of Righteousness on any other, the Event will prove him to be a weak Builder, and to have fixed his Edifice upon the Sand. Had we no firmer Bottom to ground our Hopes upon, the Imprudence

(m) Heb. iv. 9.

(n) 1 Cor. iii. 11.

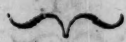
SERM. VI.  prudence of trusting, to what is so very precarious, might be excusable, but for us who may build on the Rock of Ages, no Excuse can be admitted.

BUT besides the Error of those, who entirely disclaim God's Righteousness, and labour to introduce their own, there is another on this Subject maintained not by Infidels, but Believers, and it is that the Righteousness; solely intended by our Saviour, is his Righteousness, imputed to such, as embrace the Gospel, and profess his Religion.

AND here it must be acknowledged, with all Thankfulness, that it is the singular Glory of the Gospel to have discovered, how the Demerit of the Sinner is wiped away by the Merit of the Saviour;---How *we are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption* (o). But is there any Shadow of an Argument for asserting, that because we who *were sometime Enemies, are reconciled to God by the Death of his Son* (p), and are freely admitted, of mere Grace and Favour, into the Covenant of Pardon and Salvation for his Sake and not our own, therefore

(o) 1 Cor. i. 30.

(p) Rom. v. 10.

therefore under this gracious Covenant, no- SERM.
 thing is required of us to perform, that we VI
 may stand fast in it, nothing stipulated by us, 
 besides a confident Claim of Interest, in the
 Atonement of the Son of God? When the Na-
 ture and Circumstances of that Redemption
 loudly call for a Behaviour suitable to the
 redeemed of the Lord, which is, that *they*
should depart from Iniquity, and henceforth
live not unto themselves, but unto him who
hath so dearly bought them.

If Christ fulfilled all Righteousness in his
 Life, and suffered for Sin by his Death, do
 not the Scriptures declare what Effect these
 Mercies ought to have upon us? Do they
 not teach us, *to die unto Sin* always, as *he*
died for Sin once? Do they not oblige us,
having our Consciences purged by his Blood
from dead Works, to serve the Living God (q)
and to walk before him unto all well pleasing?
 And do they not altogether condemn such
 as walk not like *Friends but Enemies of*
the Cross of Christ? Without giving them
 the least Ground for the Presumption of
 thinking, that they have a good Title to the
 Benefits of Christ's Satisfaction, though they
 pay no Regard to his Commands,---that his
 P Righteousness

(q) Heb. ix. 14.

SERM. Righteousness will be transferred upon them,
 VI. and available to Salvation, though they have
 none of their own; and are neither qualified
 to receive, nor prepared to enjoy the Glo-
 ries of his Kingdom?

AGAIN, among such, as erroneously affect
 to build Religion on the Ruins of Virtue,
 some there are, who please themselves with
 alledging, that if they are barren of an in-
 herent Righteousness, they are yet well
 stored with *Faith*, which, the Apostle allows
 them to conclude from the Instance of
Abraham, shall be imputed to them also for
Righteousness (r).

THIS, we readily confess, is St. Paul's
 Doctrine, and he had a full Commission
 from our Lord to preach it: But let him
 only be supposed to speak consistently with
 himself, and his Words will do very little
 Service to those who urge. For that the sacred
 Writer does not understand *Faith* in the Sense,
 wherein it is here taken, is evident from
 divers Passages in his Epistles: He does not
 conceive it to signify a bare Belief in Christ,
 or a presumptuous Reliance on his Merits,
 but an hearty Closing with all the Terms
 of

of the Gospel;---he gives not Encourage- SERM.
ment to wicked Men, who *hold the Truth* VI.
in Unrighteousness (s),---he exempts from
Condemnation such alone, as being in Christ
Jesus and having embraced the Faith,
live not after the Flesh, but after the
Spirit (t);---and he lays it down to Titus
as a fundamental Truth, *This is a faithful*
Saying, and I will that thou affirm con-
stantly, that they, which have believed in God
might be careful to maintain good Works:
These Things are good and profitable unto
Men (u).

AFTER these unexceptionable Testimonies,
let not any, who would oppose *Faith* to
Righteousness, think to shelter themselves
under St. Paul's Authority: He is so far
from setting them at Variance, that he sup-
poses them most strictly united, and the one
to be perfective of the other. To ad-
vance the contrary is a shameful wresting
of the Scriptures; and they, who are guilty
of that Crime, must be so to their own
Destruction.

P 2

BUT

(s) Rom. i. 18.

(t) ch. viii. 1.

(u) ch. iii. 8.

SERM.

VI.

BUT let us not be found among them,
 who either thrust the Kingdom of God
 from them, or else live under his Govern-
 ment on their own Terms: As we know
 what he offers to us, Grace for the Means,
 and Glory for the End---As we know what
 he demands of us, *That denying Ungodliness
 and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly,
 righteously, and godly,* let us learn to seek
 these Things as connected together, and
 never expect to receive the Reward without
 performing the Work, Now the Work here
 enjoin'd us is, to seek the Kingdom of God,
 and to do this, is to desire it with Eager-
 ness, and to pursue it with Spirit, under the
 Guidance of him *who is the Way of Truth,
 and the Life.* It must be uppermost in our
 Esteem, and be the fixed View of our
 Thoughts and Actions: A languid Tendency
 or an unactive Wish, will never obtain what
 so much Indifference seems to despise. We
 are to covet it earnestly, and prosecute it
 resolutely, otherwise we shall not seek so, as
 to find. All the Injunctions of Scripture
 to this Purpose imply the greatest warmth
 of Affection, the utmost Vehemence of Ap-
 plication, Diligence, and Courage; Care and
 Zeal should never be wanting, since we are
 called

called upon to *strive to enter in at the strait* SERM. Gate (x), to *labour for the Meat which en-* VI. *dureth to everlasting Life* (y), to watch, to stand fast in the Faith, to *quit ourselves like Men, and be strong* (z) to strive for the Mastery, and *so run that we may obtain* (a), and have at the End of our Christian Race an *Entrance administered unto us into God's heavenly Kingdom*. Such must be our manner of seeking it, which in its true Meaning imports, that we make Heaven the great and supreme Object of our Love,---that we never lose Sight of it,---that we frequently entertain our Minds with the Contemplation of it, and that we leave nothing undone, which may excite the highest Ardour, and quicken our most hearty Endeavour after it.

WE must seek the Kingdom of Glory thro' the Kingdom of Grace and in the Paths of Righteousness: And yet how few are there who take this only right Course to arrive at it, and confirm their Hopes of God's Promises by obeying his Laws! It is much to be doubted that too many are not apprized, how closely Happiness is link'd with Holiness. They are admitted into God's Church, and enjoy the

P 3

Name

(x) St. Luke xiii. 24.

(y) St. John vi. 27.

(z) 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

(a) ch. ix. 24.

SERM. Name of Christians, and this contents them,
VI. but they are diverted from drawing the necessary Consequences from them by numerous Amusements, by sensual Pleasures, and the empty Engagements of Wealth and Honour; their Lives are spent in regarding Trifles too much, and their Interest too little; they are over-loaded with the Cares of this World, and perfectly indolent with Regard to a better, and in their Pursuits after temporal Goods, they cast behind them all Attention towards Spiritual.

AND if this be thought to be seeking *the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, what shall be called the neglecting them? To seek them, in short, can signify nothing less, than a diligent Acquisition and Use of the one, as the instituted Means of at last obtaining the other. They must be fought by embracing readily whatever God has revealed, and executing faithfully whatever he has commanded,---by our being fruitful in all divine Graces,---by the Regularity and Earnestness of our Devotions,---by our Truth and Justice,---by a constant Disposition to do Good, and forgive Evil, and to follow after Righteousness with a perfect Heart and a pure Conscience.

THE

THE Kingdom of God and his Righteousness being then thus to be fought, we are next to consider that they are also to be fought before all Things, as well on account of their inherent Excellence, as of their benign Influence. Our Rule in the Text is, *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*. Let this be your main Employment; and if not your sole, yet your principal Care: Let not the Comforts or Conveniencies of this Life, nor any Advantages the present World can afford, be in the least regarded, when, they come in Competition with the Duties God has enjoined and the Rewards he will bestow, and the Reason why the Preference is so entirely given to those is, because they are in Fact infinitely the more valuable.

THE most exalted Degrees of earthly Wealth and Grandeur, are as nothing when compar'd with the Riches of God's Grace, and the Glories of his Kingdom, and if any think that the former deserve to rival the latter in their Esteem, let the wise Preacher convince them of their Folly; who in the Beginning of his *Ecclesiastes*, as elegantly, as truly proves, all temporal Enjoyments

SERM. to be no other than *Vanity itself*, and in
 VI. the End fums up all in favour of Virtue
 and Piety as the Foundation of solid Happiness, *Let us hear*, says he, *the Conclusion of the whole Matter, Fear God and keep his Commandments (b)*. If you would secure the most desirable Event of Things, let the Service of God be your chief Study ; let Religion be your first Care. This is the one Thing needful, and ought to be attended to not only above, but before all other Considerations whatever.

As for all other Things which Mortals most eagerly court and pant after, What can they profit? How mean, empty, and pitiful they are; how precarious and fleeting, how short-lived and perishing, and withal how fatal and deadly? Such is the encroaching Quality of the World, that where once it gets Footing it will never rest, till it gets also the Ascendant, it will never leave till it banishes the Love of God, and all Regard to his Favour,---it will never be content till it has drawn off the Mind from the most valuable Objects of Eternity, and fixed it on the vain and worthless Things of this Life.

WERE

(b) Eccles. xii. 13.

SERM.

VI.

WERE these Advantages of the Body as really excellent and substantial as our Appetites and Passions would insinuate, yet if the Effects of them are so very terrible to the Soul, and destructive of its true Happiness,---if they retard its Progress towards Heaven, and too often prevent its ever reaching God's everlasting Kingdom, Is it possible for Men to justify their Conduct, even to that self-love which so much governs them, whilst they forfeit for the Sake of present Gratifications, all Right to future Glory?

AND to set their Imprudence in a still more glaring Light, as they ruin their eternal Interests by not seeking first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, so do they likewise prejudice their temporal, by forfeiting his Protection, and calling down his Judgments upon them for their Disobedience and Contempt. They are commanded to take one Course, and they perversely pursue another: God requires them to turn their Hearts, and raise their Affections towards his Service and the Blessedness which attends it, but they will keep them groveling on the Creature, and relish nothing beyond

SERM. beyond carnal Pleasure. What Wonder is it

VI. then, that he should baulk them in their low

Views,---that he should frustrate those Projects they criminally form,---that he should give them Disappointment where they look for Success,---that he should pour down Ruin upon them instead of Prosperity? Whereas, would we but deign to think our Saviour wiser than ourselves, to receive our Directions from him, and walk in the Way which he has marked out for us; how beneficial would the Event prove? As we should find unutterable Delights at our Journey's End, so should we meet with proper Accommodations on the Road thither, and to be assured of this, we may rest ourselves, not on bare human Probability, but on Christ's Divine Testimony, who has promised, that if we *seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, all these Things shall be added unto us*, no earthly Goods shall be withheld which God sees to be either needful or convenient for us: Besides the immense Rewards of everlasting Glory, which will be the certain Result of our desiring them with Vehemence and pursuing them with Vigour, God will never leave us nor forsake us; and though he has not tied himself down to the Sorts and Degrees of worldly Emoluments, yet
we

we have his Engagement for the necessary SERM.
Supports of Life: He will afford us Subsist- VI.
ance, if not abundance,---he will administer a
Supply of Conveniencies, if not of Superfluities.

BUT even this we are not to depend upon without all Possibility of Failure; when it is promised only in general, and will be bestowed no otherwise than according to the Constitution of Nature and the settled Method of Providence: No miraculous Act of Power is to be waited for on our Behalf; and whilst we are under God's peculiar Care, we must not think to be exempt from the common Calamities of Mankind, nor from the many times unavoidable Sufferings of the Righteous. There is however this Matter of Comfort to all who set their Hearts upon the Things above, and piously seek them according to God's Appointment, that whatever Share they possess of the Things below, it is rendered truly a Blessing, and whatever Evils of Life be the Portion of their Cup, their Bitterness is sweetened and their Load sanctified, so as to leave no room for Disquiet or Impatience. They feel inward spiritual Joy in the midst of Affliction, and having Food and Raiment, learn therewith to be content: In Peace and Satisfaction

SERM. Satisfaction they possess their Souls, and have

VI. Anxiety and Distrust removed far from

them, all is calm and serene within, and under the Shadow of his Wings are they safe, who has ordered them to be *careful for nothing but how to please him, and caring for the Things of the Lord, to cast all their Care for other Things on him, for he careth for them, and loadeth us with his Benefits* (c).

OUR most indulgent Father does not, except in some extraordinary Cases, expect our Obedience either at the Expence of our Lives, or our Happiness, he knoweth whereof we are made, that we are compounded of a Body as well as a Soul,---that we have both a sensible and rational Nature,---that we live an animal Life here, and expect a divine Life hereafter, and he has accordingly provided bodily, sensible and animal Goods, suited to our present being, as well as spiritual, rational and divine Pleasures reserved for the future.

AND if our bountiful Creator has made this Provision for us, has given us Appetites to desire and Senses to relish these Advantages, it is impossible it should be

be absolutely a Fault, to pursue and enjoy SERM.
 them, and to regret in any Measure the VI.
 Want or the Loss of them. We may, no
 doubt, very innocently, and consistently with
 the Duties enjoined in the Text, concern
 ourselves about worldly Goods, because they
 are one Source of Comfort and Satisfaction
 to such Creatures as we are. But then, they
 being designed to gratify our baser Part,
 the Body, and to serve us for Conveniencies
 only during our short Stay in it, to be too
 intent after them, before they are gotten,---
 too fond of them, whilst they stay with us,---
 or too dejected, when at any time they are
 taken from us, is no way becoming Men
 and Christians, and equally condemned by
 Reason and Religion.

THE former clearly forbids such a Con-
 duct, as it is an over-valuing of Things
 much beyond their real Worth, and a suppo-
 posing our chief Happiness to be placed in
 what can at best yield but a very small Part
 of it.

NOR doth the latter less strongly protest
 against it, because of the ill Effects which
 worldly Mindedness has on Mens Innocence
 and Virtue, by taking them off from the
 Care

SERM. Care of their Souls, and the Concern for

VI.

Religion, and leading them *into Temptation, and a Snare, and many sinful Lusts which drawn Men into Destruction and Perdition* (d).

IN short, the whole Blame lies in the Excess of that Regard we are very apt to bestow on worldly Enjoyments. Whilst our Lord bids us *seek* more excellent Things *first*; we put ourselves upon the very utmost Stretch of Application for these, and are rack'd at different Times with different Pains about them; impatient to get these admired Goods, afraid perpetually of losing them, and quite desperate on their Loss.

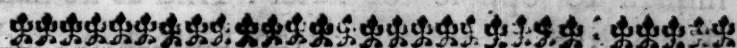
BUT let us at length take other Measures, and make sure of every solid Comfort by obeying God's Orders, and behaving ourselves in his Kingdom agreeably to that Plan of Government which he has marked out for us. Let us be diligent, but not in the wrong Place, nor for Trifling instead of Substantial Blessings; let us no longer concur with those who seem to read our Saviour's Precept backward, and interpret it directly contrary to its true Meaning: He would have them solicitous for nothing in this

this World, and they are sollicitous for no- SERM.
 beyond it. That Thought and Labour VI.
 which he requires them to employ on the
 Treasures of Eternity, they confine to the
 fleeting Amusements of a Moment, and by
 courting the Happiness of one World run
 the Risque of being miserable in both.

AND a great Risque in Truth it is, even
 with Respect to the Happiness of the present
 Life; which as Christ declares, consists not
 in the Abundance of good Things in any
 Man's Possession. That Person may be very
 wretched with them who cannot be con-
 tent without them; whilst he, to whom they
 are most indifferent, as having a much bet-
 ter Prospect, will always reap most Satisfac-
 tion from them. As long as they continue,
 he will be sure to use them to the Pur-
 poses of Piety, Charity, and Sobriety, to
 God's Glory, his Neighbour's Support and
 his Refreshment; and if they happen to be
 taken from him, he will resign freely to the
 Will of Providence, without a murmuring or
 a desponding Thought, being persuaded, that
 if he be careful to *seek first the Kingdom of
 God and his Righteousness, all these Things,*
all the Necessaries of Life, shall yet be added
unto him.



S E R M O N VII.



Rom. vi. 16.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are, to whom ye obey; whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness?



THAT the Gospel is the Power SERM.
of God unto Salvation is the VII.
the fundamental Doctrine of
Christianity, and as such St. Paul
labours most strenuously in this Epistle to
establish it against those, who denied it on
the one Hand, and those, who abused it
on the other,---against those, who main-
tained, that Men could not be saved by
Christ without an Observance of the Law,
and

SERM. and those, who concluded, that they should
 VII. be saved without the Practice of Righte-
 ~~~~~ ousness.

THE former Error the Apostle refutes in the four first Chapters, and in the fifth he sets himself to oppose the latter: And as he had shewn the Necessity of the Gospel-method of Justification from the Defects of the Jewish Dispensation, so he here proves it from the universal Prevalency of Sin. He discovers what the utmost Stretch of unenlightened Reason was never able to account for, how, *Sin having entered into the World and Death by Sin (d)*, we are rescued from the tyrannical Dominion of the one, and the slavish Fears of the other; and how, *as by the Offence of One Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of One the Free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification of Life (e)*.

BUT that no Man should have the least plausible Excuse for persisting in a sinful Course, because of the Free Gift of God in Christ Jesus, St. Paul begins the Chapter, out of which I have taken my Text, with this Question, *What shall we say then? Shall we*  
*continue*

(d) Rom. v. 12.

(e) V. 18.



*continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?* SERM. VII.  
*God forbid, says he. This is by no Means*  
 the Purport of my Argument; but the quite  
 contrary is the Conclusion, I would draw.  
*For how shall we, that are dead to Sin,*  
*live any longer therein (f)?*

THIS Death unto Sin, he proves we underwent in Baptism; by which, *we are buried with Christ our Saviour into Death, that like as he was raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life (g).* After the Example of the Death and Resurrection of our blessed Lord, we are obliged by our Baptismal Covenant to die to Sin, and rise again to a new and heavenly Life: For being in that Sacrament grafted into Christ, and made Members of his mystical Body, we ought to be conformable to him, our Head. As when *he died, he died unto Sin once, to destroy and abolish it effectually, and being raised from the Dead, he dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion over him (h),* so should we die one final Death to it, never more returning to the Practice thereof; and being

Q 2 raised

(f) Rom. vi. 1, 2.

(g) V. 4.

(h) V. 9, 10.

SERM. raised to a new Spiritual, or Christian Life,  
 VII. being planted together in the Likeness of  
 his Resurrection, as well as of his Death,  
 we should *reckon ourselves to be dead indeed  
 unto Sin, but alive unto God* (i), henceforth  
 wholly dedicating ourselves to his Service.

A VIGOROUS and hearty Obedience is most justly due to the Almighty for freeing us from the Curse of the Law, and the Bondage of Satan, and calling us into the gracious Dispensation of the Gospel; which affords sufficient Strength to withstand Sin, and preserves us from being still kept under the Tyranny of our corrupted Nature. And it is equally vile and ungrateful to take Occasion from God's tender Offers of Grace, not to reform, but to aggravate our Offences. Far be it from us to make so ill an Use of the Divine Goodness and Forbearance (the proper Design of which is to bring Men out of the Servitude of Sin by encouraging the most presumptuous Offenders not to despair of Mercy upon Repentance) as to turn it into an Argument for continuing in Ungodliness, absurdly expecting, that there will be Forgiveness yet in Store even for them, who wilfully render themselves

(i) Rom. vi. 11.

themselves Vessels of Wrath fitted to De- SERM.  
struction,---that their being God's Servants VII.  
in Name, will entitle them to their heavenly  
Master's Bounty, though they have been in  
Reality Slaves to their own Lusts,---and  
that the Reward of Righteousness will be  
their Portion, when they have taken all  
possible Pains to earn the Wages of Sin.

To such Confidence the Passage of Scrip-  
ture, which I have read to you for the  
Subject of this Discourse, gives a very pow-  
erful Check: Wherein the inspired Writer  
peremptorily asserts, that whatever Profes-  
sion a Man may boast of, whatever Cha-  
racter he may make Pretensions to, he is in  
Fact a Servant of that Master, whose Work  
he performs, and shall receive his Wages ac-  
cordingly; and then inculcates on us this  
useful Caution, That there being two quite  
contrary Services, in one or other of which  
all Mankind are, and must be engaged, op-  
posite both in the Employ and the Pay, it im-  
ports us very much duly to distinguish between  
them, lest by placing ourselves under the wrong  
Master we fail of our Expectations, and in  
the End meet with Ruin, instead of Ad-  
vancement.



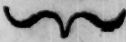
SERM.

VII.

THESE Services our Apostle styles, the one of *Sin*, the other of *Obedience*: And I will, as distinctly as I can, consider them in the Order, he has here mentioned them in, beginning with that of *Sin*.

THIS Division of Servants *St. Paul* seems to have borrowed from common Usage, as all such were of old ranged in that lowest Class of Life by Constraint or by Choice,---were either Bond or Covenant-Servants. The former, to whom the Servants of Sin bear a manifest Allusion, anciently became so, and do still in many Parts of the World, by Conquest, by Purchase, by the Commission of such Crimes as are punished with the Loss of Liberty, by contracting Debts beyond People's Ability to discharge, or by Birth.

THIS was one early Effect of Man's Original Depravation; by which the lawless Passions being enflamed and disdaining the Restraints of Justice and Moderation, they invaded each other's Persons as well as Properties, and the weaker became a Prey to the stronger: Though all were by Nature equal, and at first only the Servants of their common Creator, who by giving them Being  
had

had from thence the sole Right to their SERM.  
VII.  
Service. 

As God made all Things for himself,---for his Glory and Pleasure,---and to shew forth his Praise they are and were created; so all inanimate Creatures are in their Kind obedient to the divine Hand, which formed them, tending invariably to the End whereunto they were ordained. The Sun, Moon and Stars observe their appointed Courses, and by their regular Vicissitudes, their Light and other Influences strongly display the glorious Power and Wisdom of their Maker: Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, Winds and Storms fulfil his Word. Neither are all living Creatures without Reason less observant of God's Will than all material Creatures without Life: They too inviolably pursue the Designs of his Providence, and adhere to those Laws, which have been set them.

AND might not the same Submission have been fairly expected from Man? To whom the Lord of all Things had been much more beneficent, having created him in his own Image, in Righteousness and Holiness,---having given him sufficient Light to discern,

SERM. and not with-held sufficient Strength to  
 VII. perform what he required of him. Obedi-  
 ~~~~~  
 ence doubtless might have been looked for
 without the Assignment of any Reward for
 obeying; though to engage him the more
 chearfully and heartily in the Service of God,
 his gracious Master condescended to enter
 into Covenant with his Creature, and tie
 himself down by solemn Contract to con-
 tinue that Light and Strength, which should
 be wanted towards his paying an acceptable
 Service, and to crown his dutiful Fidelity
 with eternal Life: And thus was Man at
 first by Compact, as well as Creation, the
 Servant of God.

BUT the ungrateful Wretch, having by
 the Instigation of the Tempter basely broken
 this Covenant, almost as soon as Life and
 all Good Things had been given him richly
 to enjoy, he deserted the best, and placed
 himself under the worst of Masters,---he
 became a willing Slave to Sin and Satan,
 in such an unhappy Manner, that all natu-
 rally descending from him are born in the
 same State of Captivity. For *Adam* is said
 (k), to have *begotten a Son*, not in the Image
 of God, but *in his own corrupt Likeness*,
 after

(k) Gen. v. 3.

after his Image ; and it is the Condition of SERM.
 Bond-Servants to bring their Offspring into VII.
 the like sad Circumstances with themselves. 

HOWEVER, as the Breach of the Commandment appointed for his Trial, the Effect whereof was the Fall of *Adam*, was principally owing to the subtil Temptation of the Devil, though it must not be dissembled, that the easy Compliance of the first human Pair was inexcusable, yet as the Envy and Malice of the Apostate Spirit had the chief Share in that fatal Transaction, what was denied to the Deceiver was vouchsafed to the Deceived,---God had a Reserve of Mercy for miserable Man,---he determined to look on the offending Inhabitant of Paradise with a reconciled Countenance, and to redeem the Slave from the Bondage, he had brought himself into.

A SCHEME was fixed upon, infinitely wise in the Contrivance, infinitely good in the Execution, infinitely full in the Extent ! The Ransom was immediately settled, and though not actually paid till many Ages after, still the Virtue and Efficacy of it reached back to the Beginning. As soon as the new-formed Creature had yielded himself

SERM. himself a voluntary Captive to the Enemy,

VII. a Redeemer was promised to rescue him out
of the Snare of the Devil, and no less a Person than God's own eternal Son was to work this mighty Deliverance. In abundant Pity towards fallen Man, much Matter of Comfort was intermix'd with the awful Sentence of Condemnation: Part of that pronounced on the Seducer in Disguise is said to run in these Words, *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed: It shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel (1).* This prophetick Threatening to the one was in Effect a Promise to the other, sufficient to prevent his despair of Mercy, and encourage him to depend on God for his Recovery: Which has been since remarkably compleated in Christ Jesus; who, by taking human Nature upon him and condescending to be born of a pure Virgin, became in the most singular Manner that Seed of the Woman, which was to bruise the Serpent's Head. And until the Fullness of Time should come for God thus to send forth his Son, Sacrifices were introduced as a principal Part of Divine Worship, to be a sensible Evidence both of the Guilt, and the

(1) Gen. iii. 15.

the Atonement, as well to represent the SERM. VII.
 Death Man deserved to suffer, as to typify
 the Satisfaction to be made by the Death
 of another, and to shew, that *without shed-*
ding of Blood there was to be *no Remis-*
sion (m).

AND what was promised, has been accom-
 plished,---The Event has answered to the
 Prediction,---our blessed Saviour has by his
 Death and Resurrection obtained an entire
 Victory over our spiritual Adversaries,---has
 delivered us from our Slavery to Sin,---
 has atoned for the Breaches of the old and
 instituted a new Covenant in his Blood.
 This, from the Assistance and Favour pe-
 culiarly extended to us therein, is stiled the
Covenant of Grace.

IN this Covenant the inestimable Love of
 God to us, who had done the utmost to
 provoke his Anger, is shewn in the easy
 Precepts given and the reasonable Service
 required :---In it the unmerited Goodness of
 God is set forth in ensuring to us sufficient
 Support towards our observing those Pre-
 cepts and performing that Service, and in
 vouchsafing us a greater Measure of the
 Gifts

SERM. Gifts of his Holy Spirit on our Improve-
 VII. ment of a smaller Portion and abounding in
 the Works of Righteousness: In it likewise
 the Divine Mercy is most amply display'd
 in the Forgiveness of our Offences, and an
 Assurance of rewarding finally our imper-
 fect Services with everlasting Life.

BUT how much soever God's loving
 Kindness overflows in these Particulars, we
 are not after all to imagine, that it will be
 forcibly obtruded upon us. As it is reached
 out to us in and by a Covenant, the Per-
 formance of the Conditions of that Covenant
 on our Parts must be implied, and is expected
 by him; otherwise we shall in vain expect
 the Benefits thereof due only to the Servants
 of Obedience.

THE Renouncing of the Devil and all
 his Works, the Refusing to do his servile
 Drudgery from which we are set free, and
 the Disclaiming all Communication with
 him in his horrid Rebellion against our com-
 mon Lord and Master, are material Articles
 in the new Contract, we have engaged in:
 Or, if we have drawn any such Guilt upon
 ourselves by the Commission of Sin, the
 the only Work which the Arch-Apostate
 puts

puts his Vassals upon, then the Terms of the SERM.
VII.
Christian Covenant are, that we sincerely re-
pent of and utterly forsake it, and practi-
cally believe the Gospel, *i. e.* so believe it,
as faithfully and uniformly to discharge the
Duties of it.

THE Covenant, of which the Son of God was the Mediator, is not rigorous but merciful, is devoid of Severity and full of Favour. Into this we all have entered, and have thereby delivered ourselves from that Servitude to Sin, in which we were born; yet not so wholly, but that we are still in Danger of being again taken Captives by it. Our Life is a Scene of spiritual Warfare, and we must not think, we shall ever be secure from the Incurfions of our Enemies, or victorious in every Conflict.

THERE is no Doubt, but that whilst we stand upon our Guard, and to the utmost of our Power endeavour to maintain our Ground, the Divine Succours will be sufficient for our Defence,---sufficient to prevent our being subdued by Force or seduced by Treachery, and to preserve us from falling, at least irrecoverably falling into the Adversaries Hands by any Assault or Temptation whatsoever. For *God is faithful*, as says the
Apostle,

SERM. Apostle, *who will not suffer you to be tempted*

VII. *above what you are able, viz. whilst your*

Spirit cleaveth stedfastly unto him, but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, either the Cunning or the Violence of the Tempter, that ye may be able to bear it, and not be overcome by him (n).

FROM hence however for any of us to fancy or flatter ourselves, that God will keep us from deserting him and falling off to Sin by his Almighty Aid, when at the same Time we take no manner of Heed to our own Goings, is to rely on what we have no Authority to look for, nor Foundation to build upon.---. Our affectionate Master, though he will help us to finish our allotted Task, yet will not do all our Work for us, as if we had no Remains of Liberty or Ability to act for ourselves. That we want natural Strength to proceed acceptably in his Service must be acknowledged, still where there is not also wanting a willing Mind, he sustains our impotent Endeavours with the powerful Assistance of his Grace: But this we shall provoke him to withdraw or deny, should it be either slighted or abused by us, should we reject

reject it with Contempt or make it an Handle SERM.
for Ungodliness. VII.

SAINT *Paul*, in Order to rivet this Truth firm in our Minds, gives us to understand in many Places of his Epistles, that we may do, *Despite unto the Spirit of Grace* (o),--- may grieve him (p),---may quench his Operations within us (q), and deprive ourselves of his necessary Concurrence by suppressing and resisting his Motions : And consequently, that it is possible for us, who have been once enlightened by the ordinary Influences of the Holy Ghost, and *have tasted of the heavenly Gift, to fall away* (r), to break the Engagements we have made with our God, and exchange his Service for the Bondage of Satan.

It were to be wished, that so wretched a Desertion of the best of Masters had not been too often proved to be more than possible. When we read in the History of the *Old Testament*, that among the *Israelites*, for whom the Almighty had wrought Deliverance by Signs and Wonders and a stretched out Arm, there were many of so
abject

(o) Heb. x. 29.

(p) Ephes. iv. 30.

(q) 1 Thess. v. 19.

(r) Heb. vi. 4.

SERM. VII. *abject a Disposition, as to prefer an Egyptian Thrakdom before the free Enjoyment of the promised Land; we are justly shocked at their vicious Stupidity, we deride their mistaken Folly, not considering, how much greater is our own, when we throw off a light and gentle Yoke to load our Necks with one altogether insupportable. And this is in Truth the Case of every Christian, who chuses to return to the Slavery of Sin, and to enjoy its low Pleasures for a Season, rather than bear a few Difficulties, with the Prospect of the most desirable Advantages, in the Service of him, who cannot himself be profitted thereby, and who demands the Homage and Fidelity of his Servants, only as it will procure them an eternal and exceeding great Reward, even an unspeakable Weight of Glory.*

BUT as the Jews heretofore replied to our Blessed Saviour, who would have made them free indeed, free from Sin and Misery, *we are Abraham's Seed, and were never in Bondage to any Man (s)*, so may many among Christians pretend to vindicate themselves from the Imputation of being in Subjection to Sin and Satan, by pleading, That they are

are the professed Servants of the Lord their SERM.
VII.
 God, and him only will they own for their
 Master: And this must be allowed to be a
 good Profession and a worthy Resolution,
 when accompanied with a suitable Practice;
 though of little Benefit to such as make
 them, unless they were found to be better
 grounded and more stedfast, than they often
 are seen to be.

HE, that said, *I go, Sir, and went not (t)*,
 was wide of performing the Will of his
 Father. Nor will the calling our Saviour,
Lord, Lord, be reckoned a Service well-
 pleasing in his Sight, so long as we are
 not careful to *do* the Things, that he says
 or commands (*u*). As in all past, so in
 all future Ages, it has and will be esteemed
 safer and more advisable to judge of Men
 by their Actions than their Expressions in
 whatever Instances these two disagree, nor
 will that known Liar the Tongue often
 gain Credit to Words, where it has not
 corresponding Deeds for a Voucher.

THAT *whosoever committeth Sin, is the*
Servant of Sin (x), is the Language of
 R Scripture

(t) St. Matth. xxi. 30.

(u) St. Luke. vi. 46.

(x) St. John viii. 34.

SERM. Scripture and the Dictate of Reason: But
 VII. we are not to understand either so, as to
 conclude, that the various Backslidings of
 Error or Weakness, which all Men are
 daily exposed to through the Degeneracy
 of Nature, or even single Acts of more
 wilful and presumptuous Transgressions, pro-
 vided they are immediately repented of
 and forsaken, are such a Commission of Sin,
 as fixes on us the ignominious Title of its
 Servants, or excludes us from the Household
 of God.

THE Servants of Sin are they, who indulge
 themselves therein with Greediness, or con-
 tinue in a hardened Course of it, in spite
 of all the Restraints of God's Grace, the
 Admonitions of their Friends, and the Checks
 of their own Consciences. People of this
 Stamp may be truly said in some Degree
 or Measure to be brought under the Power
 of Sin: And of these none more truly, than
 such as incorporate Wickedness into their
 Religion,---make most Crimes venial and
 some meritorious, and teach Men to believe,
 whilst they are committing the vilest Ac-
 tions, that they are doing God Service:
 Such Persons we may venture to say, are fold

fold under Sin, are abject Slaves to it, and SERM.
fettered in an irredeemable Captivity. VII.

SAINT Peter, speaking of some seducing Teachers in his Time, describes them under this Character, that *whilst they promised those, whom they perverted from the Faith, Liberty, they themselves were the Servants of Corruption* and enthralled to their own ungodly Lusts: *For of whom a Man is overcome, of the same is he brought in Bondage (y).* When Men have long and eagerly given a Loose to their debauched Inclinations, Vice gets so far the Ascendant over them, that they are reduced to the Condition of such, as cannot cease from it. The Prophet puts the Question concerning these Men in very strong Terms, *Can the Æthiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye also do Good, that are accustomed to do Evil (z).* Confirmed Habits are not easily rooted out, when they take their Rise only from the most indifferent Things; and much less, when they have grown up from the Seeds of depraved Nature, and been watered with the Overflowings of wanton Appetite.

R 2

WHAT

(y) 2 St. Pet. ii. 19.

(z) Jerem. xiii. 23.

SERM.

VII.

WHAT the Wise Man affirms of those who are addicted to Wine (*a*), is equally true with Respect to all other inordinate Offenders; no sooner do they awake, no sooner are the Fumes of Intemperance dispersed, but they will seek it yet again; what these may call themselves, whatever they may pretend, Sin has manifestly gained such an absolute Dominion over them, that they are exposed to the unhappy Necessity of following it blindly through all its Mazes, and implicitly executing all its Orders. Whose Servants such really are, is visible beyond Contradiction; the Thing speaks of itself too plainly to need any other Proof.

THUS have I somewhat copiously considered what it is, and how Men came to be the *Servants of Sin*; a Point the more needful to be set in a full Light, since the most abject of them either do not know or scruple to acknowledge their Master, and would fain be thought to be in much more reputable Service: And after what has been already urged, not many Words more are wanting to state the Notion of *Servants of Obedience*, or fix the Character of those, who devote

(*a*) Prov. xxiii. 35.

devote themselves to the Service of their SERM.
 rightful Lord, and pay such an Obedience VII.
 to God and our Saviour as shall be ac-
 cepted by him for Righteousness.

If we reflect, how much Duty we owe to God, and what mighty Obligations we are under to our most gracious Redeemer, for all he has done and suffered for us, yet how little we perform, and how poorly we discharge the Debt of Gratitude unto him, we shall find but small Grounds to rank ourselves among his Servants, to boast of belonging to his Family, or to think our Offices entitled to a Reward from his Bounty.

HOWEVER, as Christ Jesus, our heavenly Master, experimentally has felt, whereof we are made, having been himself subject, according to the Flesh, to all the sinless Infirmities of our Nature, he does not therefore demand or expect from us more than we are able to do: A Service complete in all its Parts, without Fault or Defect, being in Man's present Circumstances impracticable. He does not forfeit his Lord's Favour, nor is he turned off, as incorrigible, even after repeated Misdemeanours. The Readiness and the Ability of Angels is not looked for at his

SERM. Hands; but that Service only, which the
 VII. Incumbrance of the World and the Flesh
 permits him to fulfil.

WOULD we indeed be Fellow-servants with the Saints and savingly of God's Household, the most express Clauses in our Covenant-charter require us to become or do our Part towards becoming new Creatures, begotten again unto good Works. Thus it runs in one Place, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments, and ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you (b)*, and in another, *Hereby do we know, that we know him, if we keep his Commandments. He, that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: Hereby we know, that we are in him. He, that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself so also to walk, even as he walked (c)*.

YET that none may be terrified by the supposed Hardship of the Conditions, we are assured, that the Obedience indispensably bound upon all Christians, is not a perfect, exact and unsinning Obedience; such an one
 only

(b) St. John xv. 14.

(c) 1 St. John ii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

only is demanded, as in our weak depraved SERM.
VII.
State, we are able by God's Help to perform. The main Business in this Service is always to maintain a Purity of Heart, though not of Life,---to bewail our Frailties and Infirmities, and implore his Pardon of them through the Merits of his dear Son; and when we have fallen, as all of us are liable to fall, into wilful Sin, not to rest in a drowsy Thoughtlessness under the Pollution, lest we awake suddenly in eternal Misery, but to return hastily to God with true Penitence of Soul, and keep a better Watch over our Ways for the future.

THE best of Men have been subject to moral Defilements,---have been sensible of numerous false Steps in the Course of their Service to God,---have humbly acknowledged them before him, and have not rendered themselves the less acceptable to him by such Acknowledgments. They have been conscious of many Failures in their Duty, have deplored their Weakness, and upon their so doing have doubtless received Pardon for the past, and Grace to strengthen them for the Time to come.

MANY likewise have through Ignorance

SERM. or Mistake transgressed the Divine Laws;
 VII. and altho' such an unhappy Turn of Mind
 does not justify Misbehaviour, or make
 Wrong to be Right, yet it must alleviate the
 Guilt of Offending: So that this Sort of
 undutiful Servants also, who rather blunder
 than disobey, may modestly hope for Mercy,
 if they prostrate themselves at their Lord's
 Feet, and in the Words of the Psalmist
 pray every one, *Cleanse thou me from my
 secret Faults (d)*, or in the Language of the
 Publican, say, *God, be merciful to me a Sin-
 ner (e)*.

SOME, again, are hurried into Sin by
 Surprise; and not having Time or Power
 to recollect themselves under some terrify-
 ing Apprehensions have acted such Things,
 as were most contrary to their settled Dis-
 positions, and they on Deliberation would
 have abhorred the Thoughts of. *St. Peter*,
 though he was of a bold Spirit naturally, yet
 being intimidated by a sudden Fear of Death,
 cowardly denied his Lord and Master; but
 on one piercing Look he soon recovered
 himself,---lamented his Offence with the bit-
 terest Compunction, and being readmitted
 to Favour and strengthened in Spirit after-
 wards

(d) Ps. xix. 12.

(e) St. Luke xviii, 13.

wards laid down his Life for Christ's Sake SERM.
 and the Gospel's. And so may others in VII.
 like Circumstances hope, that God will look
 graciously upon them, if they behave in like
 penitent Manner,---will forgive them their
 Transgressions, and give them Power to go
 on steadily and with Vigour in his Service.

THE Breaches of Duty, we have hitherto
 taken a View of, as they have a very small,
 if any, Consent of the Will leading to the
 Commission of them, may perhaps be
 thought not wholly inconsistent with the
 Singleness of Heart proper to good Servants;
 and consequently such as will not cut them
 off from the favourable Indulgence of the
 kindest Master.

BUT this inferior Degree of Undutifulness
 is not the worst, we may be charged with.
 For what shall we think of known, willful,
 and premeditated Faults,---Faults, which no
 earthly Master would pass by, but utterly
 discard so wicked a Servant, as is guilty of
 them, be his Sorrow never so deep, his
 Promises of better Behaviour never so ve-
 hement? What shall we say of these? Will
 God forgive his offending Creature in those
 Instances, where Man will not his offending
 Brother?

SERM. Brother?---We are certain he will; it being

VII. made one Condition of the Covenant of

Grace, that, that *if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: And he is the Propitiation for our Sins (f).*---When we remember our Ways and all our Doings, wherein we have been defiled, and turn unto the Lord with contrite Hearts and holy Resolutions, and no longer live the rest of our Time in Slavery to Sin, but in Subjection to the Will of God; then, through the all-powerful Influence of our Divine Mediator, will he give us Repentance unto Life, our former Iniquities shall be blotted out, and with everlasting Kindness will he have Mercy upon us. This is the comfortable State of those, who have entered themselves into God's Service on the Gospel Footing; from which they shall not be turned off and treated as Reprobates, whilst there is any Possibility of their Amendment, nor at any time perish, because he will not forgive and be reconciled to them, but because they will not repent and return to him.

AFTER all, as Innocence is much better than Repentance, and our Master's Favour more

(f) 1 St. John ii. 1, 2.

more desirable, than his bare Compassion, SERM.
 let us not displease him too far by a Neg- VII.
 lect of Duty, neither provoke him to with-
 hold his Love, tho' he may still extend his
 Pity: But let us approach in our Obedience
 as near as we can to those good and faith-
 ful Servants, who have never heinously dis-
 obeyed him,---who from their first Entrance
 into Covenant with him, have done the ut-
 most in their Power to make good their
 Engagements, and are permitted to pro-
 mise themselves a higher Place in their Lord's
 Esteem,---a more distinguished Share of his
 Liberality.

SUCH are the Servants, whom the Lord
 delighteth to honour! And though no true
 Penitent,---no one, who labours at all, shall
 miss of an ample Requital, if he be found
 watchful and diligent in his Work; yet
 as there will be Degrees, of Bounty, and
 some shall receive more and some less from
 the infinite Fullness, we should, were we wise
 for ourselves, be moved to *seek that we may*
excel (g)---to grow in Grace (b), that we
may be advanced in Glory---as we have
learned, how we ought to walk and to please God,
so to abound more and more (i),---and to press
eagerly

(g) 1 Cor. xiv. 12.

(b) 2 St. Pet. iii. 18.

(i) 1 Theff. iv. 1.

SERM. *eagerly towards the Mark, for the Prize of*
 VII. *the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (k).*

WHAT this *Reward* more particularly is, it may be expedient in the last Place to enquire: And here a comparative View of of the Wages, which *Sin* pays its Servants as *well as Obedience*, and that partly in this World, but more fully in the next, will not a little contribute to our clearer Information.

Now the Servants of Sin are at present requited with Shame and Contempt,---sometimes with Pains and Diseases,---and always with the Stings of a guilty Conscience.

NOTHING is so truly shameful or so unworthy of a rational Creature, as the Service of Sin. It degrades Man even beneath a Brute; for the one acts suitably to its Nature in those Things, by which the other debases his:---It blinds the Understanding, perverts the Will, and corrupts the moral Sense of Good and Evil:---It makes those Slaves, who would otherwise be free, and chains them down to the vilest Drudgery of going contrary to their own Minds, and the little Conviction they have left.---And

can

(k) Phil. iii. 14.

can there be a lower or more infamous A- SERM.
basement, than such a shocking Condition? VII.

THIS is what those, who have escaped it, are strongly persuaded of, and even they, who groan under it, do in Effect acknowledge. Else why do they perform the Work of Sin with so much Secrecy, and choose Retirement for carrying on their Business? Holy *Job* gives us a very just Picture of them in saying, *They are of those that rebel against the Light; they know not the Ways thereof, nor abide in the Paths thereof* (k), well-knowing, that their Actions will by no Means bear it: And they must be hardened indeed, who can boldly avow, what so very much misbecomes them. He illustrates, what he advances on the Shamefulness of Sin, by the Instance of the Adulterer, *whose Eye, he says, waiteth for the Twilight, and disguiseth his Face* (l). *The Morning is to them even as the Shadow of Death: If one know them, they are in the Terrours of the Shadow of Death* (m).

IN much the same Colours, that the good Man paints Leudness in, may Lying, Fraud, Drunkenness,

(k) ch. xxiv. 13.

(l) v. 15.

(m) v. 17.

SERM. Drunkenness, and most other Vices be repre-

VII. sented: They are all the Deeds of Dark-

ness, and have so much inherent Baseness, that they, who are the greatest Slaves to them, are still very unwilling to be known and remarked for them: since in that Case they are sure to suffer in their Reputation, and to be treated with Ignominy and Disgrace.

AND as the Servants of Sin are now requited with Shame and Contempt, so are they likewise many times with Pains and Diseases. Lust and Intemperance are most eminently distinguished by these Effects, that being *a Fire, which consumeth to Destruction* (n), and this giving *Sorrow, Wounds, and redness of Eyes, biting like a Serpent and stinging like an Adder* (o).

BESIDES, Sin in general is full fraught with Mischiefs, and all the Miseries human Nature is exposed to, are the Fruits of it. Pain of every Kind is the natural Recompense of Ungodliness, not only outward, but inward, not only of the Body, but of the Mind; and the most dreadful of all Pains, the Stings of a guilty Conscience.

What

(n) Job xxxi. 12.

(o) Prov. xxiii. 29, 30, 31.

What the Slaves to their corrupt Affections SERM.
VII.
would conceal from others, they cannot hide from themselves. They must feel and be sensible, that the Advantage, which any sinful Indulgence affords, is mean and pitiful, short-lived and perishing; but the Anguish of Soul, which the bitter Reflection occasions, is substantial and lasting, sharp enough to render the most fortunate Sinner wretched, nauseous enough to pall the Enjoyments of the Great and Wealthy, and a Burden too heavy for Man to bear.

YET these Evils are only like small Payments, the compleat Sum is still behind: For the full Wages of Sin is Death, not so much as it is the Disunion of the Soul and Body, as the utter Separation of both from God,---not so much as it is a temporal Dissolution, as an eternal Destruction. Then, is second Death, subsequent to the first, which, whosoever is *not found written in the Book of Life*, is not enrolled among God's Servants,---behaves not with the obsequious Fidelity of a true Christian, when he enjoys the happy Privilege of becoming one, shall not escape: And it will consist in the
being

SERM. being *cast into the Lake of Fire* (p), where
 VII. the Servants of Sin shall be eternally tormented.

WHILST on the contrary, the *Servants of Obedience unto Righteousness* are engaged in a Work equally *honourable, easy, advantageous*.

THE Credit of the Service always rises in Proportion to the Dignity of the Master; the Grandeur of the one reflects a Brightness on the other. Men glory, and very justly in their Attendance on earthly Princes: But much more noble is it to serve the supreme Lord of the Universe: To fulfill whose Commands the most exalted Creatures think it their highest Honour; and shall not we poor defiled Mortals be ravish'd at so vast an Advancement, as to be admitted to minister unto him in the meanest Offices!

AND, yet to serve him cannot, properly speaking, be in any Respect mean, and the devout Psalmist had great Reason for saying, that he *had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of his God, than to dwell in the Tents of Ungodliness* (q).

BESIDES,

(p) Rev. xx. 15.

(q) Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

BESIDES, as there is nothing low or unbecoming, so is there nothing hard or painful in God's Service: It is, what it is represented to be, perfect Freedom,—not indeed a Liberty of doing what our corrupt Nature may incline to (for that is only another Name for Slavery) but a Liberty of following Truth and Reason, of exercising Virtue and Righteousness, and of obeying the Will of God by their own. If such Work can give Uneasiness, this is an accidental Effect, occasioned, not by any Hardship in the Service, but by the Incapacity of the Servants: Who have contracted bad Habits, and impaired their Strength in their former Employ; and therefore, whatever Difficulties, they meet with in the new one, ought in Justice to be imputed to Sin and not to Obedience.

AND be these Difficulties never so great at first, yet they soon vanish: They are found only at the Entrance into God's Household, a little Time and Application will conquer them, and all afterwards will become easy, pleasant, happy.

SERM.

VII.

WHICH brings us to the concluding Circumstance most powerfully recommending God's Service to us, viz. That it is advantageous, being *profitable unto all Things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come (a)*. There is no living one Moment comfortably out of it, nor can we otherwise be exempt from the Anguish of Mind, and the Apprehension of Punishment, which Sin produces. To be free from these Evils is no small Advantage in itself; though small in Respect of that inward Quiet and Satisfaction, that Self-Approbation, and those glorious Hopes, which fill the Heart of the Obedient: For *the Work of Righteousness* is, what the Prophet foretells it *shall be, Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever (b)*.

THEY, who are conscious of having served God acceptably, must enjoy that blissful Complacency of Soul which the World can neither give to, nor take from them. So long as their Reason justifies and their Conscience applauds, what they have done, how insignificant will be the Frowns of Men, how

(a) 1 Tim. iv 8,

(b) Isai. xxxii. 17.

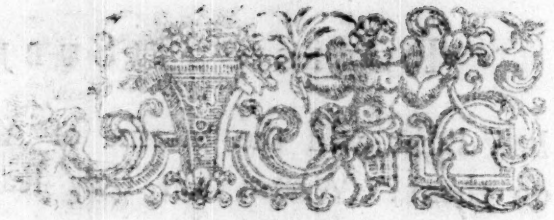
how light will the Storms of Adversity fall on them? Whom can they fear, or what shall they dread, who have an Almighty Protector? How can they want any thing, who dwell under the Patronage of the Giver of all Goodness, under the Eye and Favour of the most indulgent Lord? When he provides for them at present, better than they can even desire, and will at last do for them infinitely more than they deserve. For *the Gift of God is eternal Life (c)*, in which is included every thing that is glorious and blessed, and to which this most ravishing Sentence will introduce them, *Well done, ye good and faithful Servants,---enter ye into the Joy of your Lord (d)*.

TOWARDS the obtaining whereof, let us now and always offer up our Petitions to our great Master in Heaven in these approved Terms of our Liturgy, *Almighty and merciful God, of whose only Gift it cometh, that thy faithful People do unto thee true and laudable Service, grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this Life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly Promises, through the Merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

S 2 S E R M O N

(c) Rom. vi. 23.

(d) St. Matth. xxv. 21.



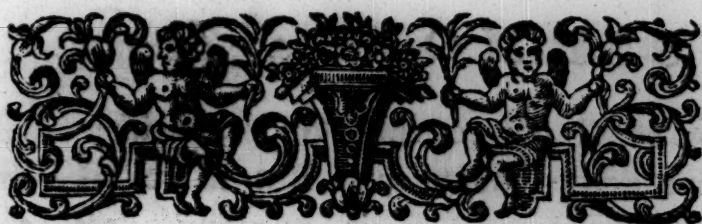
S E R M O N

For what is a man's life but a vapor?
 He shall grow old, he shall grow weary,
 and like a flower shall fade:
 As the grass, as the flower of the field,
 so shall he be.

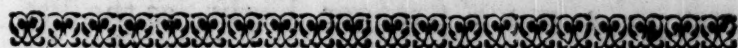


the present moment is the only time
 we have for doing good.
 For what will it avail us
 to be adorned with many virtues,
 if we do not use them?
 Let us therefore, my friends,
 be diligent in every good work,
 for we know not the day of the Lord.

S E R M O N



S E R M O N VIII.



St. Matth. xvi. 26.

*For what is a Man profited, if
he shall gain the whole World,
and lose his own Soul? Or
what shall a Man give in Ex-
change for his Soul?*



SHOULD we understand this SERM.
Passage of Holy Writ in the VIII.
lowest Sense, the Words are
capable of, and suppose, that
by the *Soul* here is meant only
the present mortal Life; our Saviour's Rea-
soning would be however just and conclu-
sive. For what will all the World and all
its admired Enjoyments signify to us, when
we are removed into quite a new Scene?
Whither we can carry nothing away with

SERM. us of all our earthly Goods, neither shall
 VIII. our Pomp follow us. But if we take the

Soul to mean, as it properly does, the spiritual and principal Part of our Nature, what makes us to be Men, rational, moral, and eternal Beings; the Argument will appear in a much stronger Light, as the Passage is thus raised to a more exalted Sense, and adapted to a more excellent Purpose.

If Life is preferable to all Things in the World; If whatever a Man is possessed of he would gladly part with to ransom himself from the Jaws of Death: Much more freely should he resign all his temporal Acquisitions together with even this mortal Life itself (if necessary) in order to save his Soul,--to obtain a better Resurrection and a blessed Immortality. Since so inconceivable an Happiness is absolutely to be preferred before All, that Men account valuable in this World, and, indeed, before the World itself.

THIS is the only Way of Thinking, which can have the Approbation of sound Reason, as it has the Authority of divine Revelation: And notwithstanding that small Price, which wicked Men, blinded by their Vices, set upon their Souls, selling them
 many

many times, as it were for nothing, and **SERM.**
quitting their Title to an everlasting In- **VIII.**
heritance for very trifling Considerations, our
good Lord, whose Judgment may be im-
plicitly relied on, was, we see, in very dif-
ferent Sentiments, and by putting the Que-
stion home to us, would have us answer it
for ourselves: Which if we do with any to-
lerable Seriousness and after due Reflection,
we shall be obliged to acknowledge the hu-
man Soul to be a Thing of real intrinsic
Worth, its Value to be inestimable, and its
Loss to be irreparable. And this should
any one ignorantly doubt of, there are many
Arguments to convince him of his Error.
These I propose here to consider with a
View of awakening you to a just Sense of
your most important Interests.

I. THE great Value of the Soul may be
discovered from its superior Faculties and
Perfections above every other Being in this
World.

THE Soul, tho' fallen from its original
Dignity, is yet venerable in its Ruins. It is
capable of reaching with its Thoughts to the
most distant Objects either in Time or Place,
of making the past and absent present, and

SERM. of ranging in an Instant through the Uni-
 VIII. verse:---It can mark out the Paths, compute
 the Distances, calculate the Dimensions, and
 determine the Motions of the heavenly Bo-
 dies:---It measures the Surface of the Earth,
 and dives into its capacious Womb:---Its
 Reason extends to all natural Things, and
 enlightened by Revelation advances even to
 supernatural, so far as to penetrate into the
 invisable Regions of Bliss and Misery:---
 It can follow Effects to their Causes; till
 through the Chain of second Causes, which
 are but so many natural Effects dependant
 each on the foregoing, it ascends up to God
 himself the great Author of Nature, the
 first, and, strictly speaking, the only Cause
 of all Things:---In short, it is the Soul,
 which alone of all Creatures upon Earth
 can trace out its divine Origin, can conceive
 some faint Idea of the Infinite Creator, and
 look into his adorable Perfections.

AND as the Soul can discern and demon-
 strate the Natural, so can it transcribe and
 imitate the Moral Attributes of God. How-
 ever low it may lay grovelling now, or
 how much soever it may be at present
 polluted, yet is it capable of being renewed
 after the Image of him, who formed it; of
 being

being purified, even as he is pure, and raised almost to an Equality with those refined angelic Natures, which do most nearly resemble the Fountain of all Excellency. Truth, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and the like, are the glorious Robes, with which the Soul may adorn itself, and by getting free from the Dominion of Sense and the Bondage of Corruption, by keeping a due Restraint on carnal Appetites, and gradually weaning itself from the Pleasures of the Body, it may be trained up to lead a spiritual and divine Life, to relish here in this depraved State the heavenly Food of Wisdom and Purity, of Love and Contemplation: With which it shall for ever solace itself hereafter, if it is diligent to root out whatever may vitiate or corrupt its Taste, and relish of such elevated Enjoyments.

THUS, to no contemptible Degrees of both natural and moral Perfection is the Soul even now able, by God's Grace, to attain; and yet these, we are sure, shall be inconceivably heightened in the World to come, and the Joys resulting from them be as boundless in their Continuance, as in their Nature,---fully as extensive as the Faculties of the Soul, and everlasting as its Essence.

AND

SERM.
VIII.

SERM.

VIII.

AND this intimates to us another Argument of the Value and Excellency of the Soul, namely, *that it is immortal*. It is not, like the material Beings we daily see and are daily employ'd about, made up of an infinite Number of gross and jarring Particles, perpetually liable to Change, Corruption, and Dissolution; but it is an incorporeal Substance, as distinct from Matter in its Nature as in its Properties, pure, simple and uncompounded, without all disagreeing Qualities and divisible Parts, one spiritual Essence, by its own original Constitution altogether free and exempt from any Decay, and by its very Frame appointed to an eternal Existence, a Privilege it cannot be deprived of by a less Act of Omnipotence, than that by which it was at first created, nor possibly robb'd of those Pleasures, when once in its Fruition, which are at God's Right Hand for evermore.

THESE Arguments, suggested by our Reason, for the inestimable Value of the Soul, may be farther strengthened from considering, what Place it bears in its Maker's Esteem; whose unerring Knowledge will not permit him to judge amiss concerning the
intrinsic

intrinsic real Worth of Things. And if we find it to be exceeding precious in his Sight, well may we allow it to be highly valuable. Let us then enquire and learn from the Divine Conduct towards Mankind, at what an advanced Price the whole Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are pleased to estimate the Souls of Men. SERM.
VIII.

God the Father, when he purposed to create these spiritual Beings and unite them to Bodies of Clay, well-knowing the vast Hazards they would be exposed to and the infinite Risques they would run (though no other than were the Consequence of a free but peaceable Nature) was so deeply concerned for their Preservation, that he thought nothing too much to secure them in a Way consistent with their essential Liberty and Possibility of Transgressing. As they were to be placed in a State of Tryal to be trained up by a Life of Holiness to a Capacity for higher Enjoyments, than what a terrestrial Paradise could afford, it was expedient to appoint some Test of their Obedience, and what less Proof could there be expected, than the abstaining from the Fruit of one only Tree amidst that Profusion of Delights, which he had spread around them?

AND

SERM.

VIII.

AND when the Almighty foresaw, that they would neither hearken nor obey,----- that being willingly seduced by the Subtlety of the Tempter, they would forfeit their Innocence and his Favour, and oblige his Justice, to banish them from that Seat of pure Pleasures, where he should place them; such was the Overflowing of his tender Respect for them, that he decreed to remove the Scene of their Happiness from Earth to Heaven: And to that End he instituted the Covenant of Repentance instead of that of Innocence, which they had so basely broken both for their Posterity and themselves: All their Descendants as Inheritors of their depraved Nature having sinned in them, and come short of the Glory of God.

And that by this new System of Reconciliation God might the more effectually recover the lapsed Creatures from Sin and Misery, he determined to grant it in such a Manner and upon such wise and weighty Considerations, as should affect them at once with the deepest Sense of his Mercy and Compassion, and the most awful Dread of his Severity and Justice; that so whilst by the former he gently drew them, by the latter

latter he might terrify them into Amend-
ment.

SERM.
VIII.

BUT Repentance without Punishment could not atone for their Disobedience; and it has evidently appeared from the Event, that some more valuable Satisfaction was necessary, and therefore demanded by infinite Wisdom, Holiness, and Justice, in order to render a Reconciliation with Sin-polluted Souls consistent with the Authority of his Government over them, and the Purity of his own Divine Perfections.

TO punish the Offenders themselves must have been utterly to destroy them, and to leave no Objects for unbounded Goodness to be exercised upon,----to pardon them without any Suffering must have encouraged them to offend still more presumptuously; God thought fit therefore to chalk out a middle Course, and avoiding entire Destruction on the one Hand, and absolute Forgiveness on the other, he as wisely as graciously appointed and accepted of, a vicarious Punishment.

BUT to manifest in the highest Degree both his Esteem of the Souls of Man and his Abhorrence

SERM. Abhorrence of their Guilt, he determined to

VIII. admit no meaner Person for their Substitute

to suffer in their Place and Stead, than his only beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased. The infinite Value of whose Sufferings plainly discovers the Value of those, for whom he suffered; and in this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him, he sent him to be the Propitiation for our Sins (a), and to be made Sin (i. e. a Sin-Offering) for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him (b). To the Praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath accepted us in the Beloved, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace (c), and Christ being delivered by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God was by wicked Hands crucified and slain (d) for the Expiation of our Offences: Whereupon God was graciously pleased to receive his fallen Creatures again into his Favour, promising to crown them with Rewards far beyond their Deserts, if they returned from their evil Ways, and put off concerning the former

(a) 1 St. John iv. 9, 10.

(b) 2 Cor. v. 21.

(c) Ephes. i. 6, 7.

(d) Acts ii. 23.

former Conversation the old Man, which is SERM.
VIII.
 corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts; or otherwise, if they persisted in their rebellious Impenitence, treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath, to inflict on them the Punishments, they should justly deserve. Agreeably to what he has revealed unto us by his Apostle (e), that *he will render to them, who by patient Continuance in well doing seek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life; but to them that are contentious and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man, that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.*

THIS is the Plan of that Deliverance, which for the Benefit of the Souls of Men the Divine Wisdom contrived before the Fall, and Mercy executed after it; and by this the Father of Spirits most evidently expressed the great Regard he had for them.

NOR have we less remarkable Proof of the exceeding high Value, which God the Son our Saviour set on them, if we may judge thereof by the Price he paid for them.

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(e) Rom. ii. 7, &c.

SERM.

VIII.

It is manifest, that he had no contemptible Opinion of the Worth of Souls, in that for their Sakes he willingly undertook to bear the chief Part in the Father's most stupendous Scheme, calculated not less for their Good, than his Glory.

To save Mens precious Souls, he thought it worth his while to be made lower than the Angels,---to come down from Heaven, from the Bosom of infinite Bliss, and to partake of Flesh and Blood, though *he was in the Form of God*, and in Nature and Essence equal with God; yet for their Improvement and Deliverance he condescended to *make himself of no Reputation, and to take upon him the Form of a Servant (f)*, to live a poor miserable Life, and to die a painful, lingering and accursed Death. Thus *Christ bath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God (g)*. He was free, as *Isaiab* had of old prophesied concerning him, to be *despised and rejected of Men*, to become a *Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief*, that *we with his Stripes might be healed (b)*,---and as it has

(f) Phil. ii. 6, 7.

(g) 1 St. Pet. iii. 18.

(b) Isai. liii. 3, 5.

has been since preached unto us in the **SERM.**
 Gospel, that *We were not redeemed with cor-* **VIII.**
ruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, but with
the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb with-
out Blemish and without Spot, who was fore
ordained before the Foundation of the World,
but was manifested in these last Times (i).

AND can we think, that the Son of God would have paid down so vast a Price, as his very Life and Blood for mean and worthless Things? He could not have so low an Esteem of his own divine Glory, as to divest himself of it for Trifles: He could not have so slight an Apprehension of Shame and Distress, Pain and Misery, as to thrust himself into a State of such Suffering for Beings of little Value. Nothing, but what is inestimable, could over-balance the Bliss, he parted with, and the Anguish he underwent. How then can we imagine those Souls to be of small Account, which the Son, one in Majesty and Divinity with the Father, thought worth the dying for? He, who is infinitely wise and knowing, cannot be mistaken in the Value of Things, nor by any Fallacy be induced to make less than the most considerable Purchase at so excessive a Rate.

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(i) 1 St. Pet. i. 18, 19.

SERM.

VIII.

WE may still further be convinced of the high Importance of our Souls from the singular Respect and Concern, which the Holy Ghost has also shewed for them.

It is for their Sakes, that he has so industriously operated in the Kingdom of our Saviour,---that he has taken so much Pains to make the Subjects thereof happy. It is upon their Account, that he has made so many Revelations of God's Will to Mankind, and confirmed them by mighty Signs and Wonders,---that he has used such astonishing Methods to make the Kingdoms of the World become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, in order to extricate the bewildered Souls of Men out of those Mazes of Error, in which they had involved and lost themselves. And it is for their Benefit, that he still continues to shed forth his heavenly Influences upon them,---that he still inspires them with pious Thoughts, and importunes them with urgent Motives, from a View of quickening them if possible, to a Sense of their Danger, of opening their Eyes, that they sleep not in Death. So zealously and affectionately is the blessed Spirit concerned for the Welfare of Men's Souls, that
he

he will not resign such a Charge to them-
selves, to the Guidance of their own Reason;
tho' one might think, their natural Powers
were sufficient to guard them from those Rocks
and Shelves, to which they are obnoxious in
passing through the dangerous Ocean of the
World.

SERM.
VIII.

BUT he better knows, how much they need
his divine Assistance; and therefore never
leaves them nor forsakes them, till they re-
nounce, and do Despair to him. He never
slumbereth nor sleepeth; but is continually
watching over them for their Good, by va-
rious Ways warning them of any Evil, which
threatens them, and assisting them against the
Assaults of those malicious Spirits, who range
up and down in the Earth, seeking whom
they may seduce.

AND in all such Conflicts, unless our Souls
cowardly and wilfully draw back, their great
Supporter renders them more than Conque-
rors. And when, as many times they do,
they yield themselves Captives to the Ene-
mies of their Salvation, yet does he not pre-
sently give them up for lost; but he pur-
sues them eagerly, in order to their Rescue,---
follows them with his Motions and Impor-
tunities,

SERM. tunities, and never desists, till he has recovered them out of the Snare of the Devil,
 VIII. or found them so absolutely in Love with their Chains, as not in the least to second his gracious Efforts for their Deliverance. When he finds them so stupidly fond of Death and Destruction, he like a grieved Friend leaves them with Reluctance to their sad Choice and deplorable Fate.

AFTER all this, and much more that he has done, can we suppose, the Holy Ghost would be so diligent in his Ministry for Souls,---would take such Pains to save them,--would continue to exercise his Care over them on Earth, whilst the Son intercedes for them in Heaven; if he did not know assuredly that they were of an exceeding high Value?

It would be, a lessening of the Argument I have been upon, to urge here that Esteem and Concern, which the Angels in heavenly Places entertain for their Fellow-creatures in this inferior World, of like spiritual Nature with themselves; since the affectionate Regards of the Deity are infinitely more honourable, as well as beneficial, than those of the chiefest created Beings: And since besides
 they

they are Servants of his that do his Pleasure, SERM. VIII.
all ministring Spirits sent forth to minister for
them who shall be Heirs of Salvation (k).

So that whatever kind Offices they do us, are ultimately to be resolved into the Love and Favour of our common Lord and Master, and to him must the Glory be ascribed.

I SHALL therefore rather proceed to this awakening Consideration, that the Loss of the Soul is, what our Saviour declares it to be, irreparable.

BUT can an immaterial Substance be dissolved, or an immortal Being perish? Either of these Points must not be affirmed. No, by the Loss of the Soul we are not to understand its strict and proper Destruction, as though it could be wiped out of the Book of Nature, or cease to have any more Existence in the Universe. The Deprivation it is capable of undergoing, is of its Happiness, not of its Essence, and such amazing Injury and Damage may it receive, as to make even Annihilation itself (however dreadful the Thought) to be coveted as a Blessing.

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(k) Heb. i. 14.

SERM.

VIII.

THIS awful Truth appears unquestionable from those dreadful Torments, the Soul is obnoxious to. For tho' we are altogether ignorant of the Manner, how one Spirit acts upon another, yet the Reality of the Fact there is no room to dispute, and consequently an immense all-commanding Spirit can make such, as are finite and dependant, to become sensible of his Wrath and Displeasure in many more Ways than we are now able to conceive; and though our Souls seem not capable of being affected with material Strokes, still who can maintain with any Colour of Proof, that they may not have dismal and terrifying Thoughts imprinted on them, such as shall torture them inexpressibly Day and Night.

A SPECIMEN hereof is sometimes afforded at present in the Agonies of despairing Persons; who labouring under no visible Indisposition of Body are however seized with such an inconceivable Anguish of Mind, as no corporeal Pains can bear any Proportion to.

AND if the Soul is in this World liable to feel the wrathful Resentments of the Almighty, what shall hinder it from having as quick,

quick, or probably a much quicker Sense of them in that which is to come?

SERM.

VIII.

MANY, indeed, are now by sensual Mirth and vicious Indulgences diverted from reflecting on their Actions, and frequently lull themselves asleep with false and deceitful Hopes, crying, Peace, Peace to their Souls, when there can be no Peace, so long as their Offences against God, their Neighbours and themselves are so many. But in another State Things will appear in their proper Dress and genuine Light: None shall then be able to impose on themselves, much less on him, from whose Sight there is no Darkness nor Shadow of Death, which can hide the Workers of Iniquity. They will then be exposed to their own furious Thoughts, and nothing shall they have to still the Clamours of their guilty Minds: As Thought is the inseparable essential Property of the Soul, the self-condemned Sinners will be always under the Lash of Conscience, representing continually to their View those Crimes, which have separated between God and them, and set an invincible Bar between them and Happiness: Their Perceptions too will be much clearer than at present, and their Convictions more sharp

SERM. and piercing. The perverse Obstinacy of
 VIII. those Sinners against their own Souls in fly-
 ing from Life, and courting Death, will
 then shew itself in the most confounding
 Light, and strike them through with Sorrows
 unfelt on this Side the Grave. Whatever
 Amusements the guilty Mind may meet
 with here in the Body, it will find
 none when out of it, to keep it from turn-
 ing its own Tormentor. No carnal De-
 light shall follow it, but in Remembrance
 only, bitter to the Thought and smarting to
 the Reflection; so that its Enjoyment in
 this State will prove its Punishment in the
 next.

NOR shall the sin-defiled Soul obtain any
 more Satisfaction from its Company than
 from itself. For if it madly persists in
 provoking God's Vengeance by its impious
 Courses during the Time of its present Pro-
 bation, it shall also be tied down to the in-
 sulting Conversation of Devils and the Fury
 of execrable Spirits. It is even natural for
 Beings of the same Kind and Disposition to
 associate together; and it is moreover one
 of the fixed Laws of the future World,
 that the Wicked shall have no Inheritance
 with the Righteous. *Between us and you,*
says

says *Abraham* to the rich Man, *there is a* SERM. *great Gulph fixed; so that they, which would* VIII. *pass from hence to you, cannot, neither can* they pass to us, that would come from thence (l).

When the Souls of the Ungodly then are separated from their earthly Mansions, they shall be confined to the cursed Society of the Apostate Angels, whom they have chosen to imitate and resemble, and who will take as much malicious Pleasure in upbraiding and tyrannizing over them, as they do now in tempting and caressing them.

IN this dismal and comfortless Situation, this hateful and most shocking Company must the impenitent Soul drag on its Time till the general Resurrection, and the final Judgment. When being reunited to its old Companion the Body, different indeed in Quality, yet the same in Substance, it shall be rendered capable of sustaining corporeal as well as mental Tortures, and be punished (as the Holy Spirit expressly declares) with unquenchable Fire. *For the Lord himself shall in that Day descend with a Shout in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (m), who shall be* turned

(l) St. Luke xvi. 26.

(m) 2 Theff. i. 8.

SERM. turned into Hell, where their Worm dieth
VIII. not, and their Fire is not quenched (n). Such,

as stand out hardened in their ungodly Courses, offend with an high Hand, and will not now be reclaimed from their Wick- edness, shall then be involved in those raging Flames; ---their Bodies shall for ever burn, but never consume; ---and their Souls be lashed with all the Terrors which an un- limited and almighty Power can justly in- flict, added to their own internal Anguish, Rage, and Despair.

And that these Torments, as complicated as the Crimes which cause them, will be no less eternal in Duration, than intense in De- gree, is very clear and evident from plain repeated Testimonies of Holy Scripture; which must establish the Faith of every Christian as to this Article on a Foundation too firm to be undermined by the Ob- jections of depraved Reason, or the Preju- dices of a vitiated Self-love. The righteous Judge has himself assured us in his Gospel, that in the End of the World, he, the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit on the Throne of his Glory, and before him shall
be

(n) St. Mark ix. 44.

be gathered all Nations:---Then shall he say SERM. VIII.
 also to them on the left Hand, Depart from
 me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire prepared
 for the Devil and his Angels. Nor shall
 the Execution be delayed, but these shall go
 away into everlasting Punishment (o). And
 in the Book of his prophetic Revelation he
 foretells, that in those Days Men shall seek
 Death, and shall not find it, and shall desire
 to die, and Death shall flee from them (p)---
 that they shall drink of the Wine of the
 Wrath of God, which is poured out without
 Mixture into the Cup of his Indignation,---
 that the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up
 for ever and ever, and they have no Rest
 Day nor Night (q).

Now what can these express Passages
 mean, if they are not to be understood of
 endless Sufferings? Human Sophistry may
 disguise, or good Nature soften the Force
 of them: Evasions have been often found
 out, and as often overthrown; and to inter-
 pret such like Texts only of temporary Pu-
 nishments, has been frequently shown to be
 an unjustifiable perverting of the Sense of
 plain Words.

BUT

(o) St. Matth. xxv. 31, 32, 41, 46.

(p) Rev. ix 6.

(q) xiv. 10, 11.

SERM.
VIII.

BUT let not us be in the Number of those, who deny or doubt of the Truth of God's Threatenings any more than of his Promises,---who fancy there is in the Deity a latent Will contrary to the Revealed, and flatter with Hopes of Mercy in Store, even such as have wearied out the Divine Patience, and been all their Life-time treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath. Rather let us believe God to be true, and and every Man, who disputes his Veracity, a Lyar: Let us be convinced by Reason, by Revelation, that nothing can be given in Exchange for the Soul, so that he must let that alone for ever; and knowing those Terrors of the Lord to be certain, let us diligently labour to escape them, it being an infinitely wiser Part to rely on his Declarations for the Truth of these Things, than to wait for Conviction from our own Experience.

UPON the whole, if any thing here before offered has been thought weighty enough to make a right Impression on us,---if we are roused to a due Sense of the inestimable Value and irreparable Loss of our Souls, a slight Exhortation will be sufficient to prevail

vail on us to guard them with a watch- SERM.
ful Eye, and preserve them blameless unto VIII.
Christ's heavenly Kingdom, nor on any Con-
sideration part with that to Satan, which
Jesus has purchased for God.

THE Tempter, no doubt, will make us large
Offers, and, where nothing less will allure us,
all the Glories of the World shall be at our
Service, if we will fall down and worship him.--
But it is obvious what wretched Gainers we
shall be by taking such a rash Step: And
besides, what is all, that the Devil has to
give (were every earthly Good really in his
Possession, as he falsely pretends) when com-
pared with those heavenly Blessings, which
God has promised, and will infallibly bestow
on such, as commit their Souls to him in
well-doing?

*What therefore shall it profit a Man to
gain the whole World, and lose his own
Soul? Shall the Benefit received bear any
Proportion to the Damage sustained? That
all sublunary Treasures are a poor Price for
our Souls, will easily appear from weighing
the Profit against the Loss.*

SERM.

VIII.

THE one has been already seen, and as for the other, what mighty Advantage can the entire Possession of the whole World be to us? Can it administer more than Necessaries and Conveniencies to the Body, and will not a Competency do this as well? Is the greatest Abundance able to gratify our extravagant Appetites, or will it not rather excite them? Do not Mens Desires increase with their Acquisitions, and is not the Whole as incapable of giving them Content, as the Part they are already Masters of?

GRANTING however, that the World could satisfy the most greedy, yet what Comparison is there between the Indulgence of our Fancies and the Forfeiture of our Souls? If we ruin them for ever to obtain the sinful Pleasures of a Moment,--if for the Sake of Things, we want not, and shall not enjoy, we plunge ourselves into infinite Misery, can such a Conduct be justified to common Prudence?

NOR would our Folly be at all the more excusable, were we to purchase by the Sale of our Souls the most rapturous Delights during

during our present Being. But this is widely differing from our Case: For when any of us have gotten the largest Share of external Goods, it is very doubtful whether they will prove good, or we shall be a Jot the happier for them. Though they will most certainly make us much more unhappy than we should have been without them, if either by raising Envy in others, they expose us to those Storms, which would have blown over us in a lower State, or by promoting Luxury in ourselves, they bring on us and our Posterity such racking Diseases, as leave us far more wretched, than Poverty would have done.

SERM.

VIII.

CAN the Gain then tempt Men to run themselves into everlasting Perdition, for the Sake of uncertain Goods, and those too of a very uncertain Continuance, since they are not secure of possessing them for an Hour, nor can have any Assurance of their Stay with them? But if they do not leave their Owners, and flee away like an Eagle towards Heaven, still is it not possible that the Owners may be taken from them, that as soon as we have made ample Provision for many Years Indulgence, we may be snatched away like the rich Man in the Gospel,

SERM. Gospel, upon the very Brink of Enjoyment,
 VIII. and hurried into a wretched Eternity, there
 ~~~~~  
 to languish away those Years in Anguish,  
 which we thought to have spent in Sensu-  
 ality? Or, though we should be permitted  
 to continue here and enjoy ourselves to the  
 utmost Stretch of our loose Desires, though  
 we be suffered to grow as old in Vice as  
 the antediluvian Sinners, does not this after  
 all pass away like a Tale that is told?  
 And what succeeds, but infinite Detriment  
 and eternity of Shame, Regret and Misery?  
 So that the longest Life of sinful Gratifica-  
 tion is a very poor exchange for a State  
 of endless and inconceivable Wretchedness, and  
 to part with our Souls for the Enjoyment  
 of the World and all its Glories, were  
 our Time here to be lengthened out to a  
 thousand Ages, would still be an Act of  
 the most blind and desperate Sottishness:  
 Because, to lose our Souls, is to be eter-  
 nally miserable without Relief, eternally  
 tortured without any Intervals of Ease or  
 Rest.

To what an inconceivable Degree then  
 must our Imprudence be aggravated, if we  
 part with our Souls for such uncertain, in-  
 terrupted, and precarious Blessings? To  
 throw

throw ourselves into never ceasing Torments SERM.  
 for the Fruition of an unsatisfactory and a VIII.  
 transitory World, argues us in short to be  
 entire Strangers to Reason, and utter Enemies  
 to our own Interest.

To draw at length to a Conclusion. If the whole World will not countervail the loss of our Souls, let us not idly dispose of them for a much less valuable Consideration, let us not wantonly and in Sport throw them away, without any Prospect of the least advantageous Return, and yet this is the daily Trade of Thousands; witness only the great Crimes of common Swearing and intemperate Drinking, which notoriously reign among all Ranks and Degrees, and as they are the Shame, so, it is to be feared, they will become the Ruin of a most abandoned People. The Unprofitableness of the former of these evil Practices a Word or two will make sufficiently apparent. It is absolutely void of all Temptation, it indulges neither the Appetites of the Sensual, nor gratifies the Inclinations of the Covetous, it is the mere overflowing of an unsanctified Spirit, which dares to vilify and provoke its Maker, in down-right Gaiety and Insolence. The Offender can get nothing by all his vain and profane Oaths

U

but



SERM. but a Stain and a Dishonour, he must render

VIII. himself the Object of God's Displeasure and Man's Contempt; and as he defies the divine Power, and affronts the divine Majesty, must be exposed to a Resentment as sure as terrible; God having declared, that *he will not hold him guiltless who taketh his Name in vain* (r).

NOR can the Drunkard plead much more Temptation than the Swearer: If there is any Pleasure in his Intemperance, it is only that of a Brute, as his Vice consists, in a suppression of Reason, a dissipation of Thought, and a confusion of all his Senses. Besides, present Pain and Sickness, and a long Train of subsequent Distempers too evidently shew, how dearly he buys his stupid Enjoyment, as the Unprofitableness of the Sin does, how cheaply he sells his Soul. An Habit of Drunkenness is remarkably expensive and wasteful; it often impoverishes the Rich, and necessarily starves the Poor, who still will not be reclaimed from their Debaucheries by the Punishments of the Law or the Threatenings of the Gospel, though they have no better Prospect before them than Misery temporal and eternal. There are  
other

other Vices, indeed, to which Men may SERM.  
plead stronger Incitements, since they seem VIII.  
to promise them more worldly Gain or  
carnal Delight; but what will all such  
Profit or Pleasure avail them, when they shall  
be summoned away to expiate their Guilt  
in everlasting Burnings? Innumerable Worlds  
with all their Pomp and Glory, had they  
them in their Possession, would they then  
freely part with for their Redemption, when  
nothing will be accepted in Exchange for  
their Souls---when the Season of Mercy being  
at an End; the Day of inexorable Vengeance  
breaks in upon them.

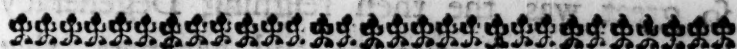








## S E R M O N IX.



St. Luke xi. 42.

----- *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*



UCH, as has been very justly SERM. remarked, is the Weakness or IX. the Perverseness of Man's Understanding, that, in judging on the Relations Things bear to one another, whatever suffers in this comparative View, is too often absolutely rejected, as insignificant and worthless.

THE Truth of this Reflection is most clearly seen in that Distinction, which is many times made between natural and positive Duties; which, as they flow in separate Channels, though derived from the

SERM. same Spring, are considered by some Persons

IX. more for what they differ, than for what they agree in.

THE *Jews* in our Blessed Saviour's Days were egregiously guilty of this Fault; and so great was the then reigning Degeneracy both as to Sentiments and Manners, that the straightest Sect among them had lost all Regard for moral Righteousness, fancying, that a minute Observance of the ceremonial Part of their Law would be an Equivalent for the Neglect of the weightier Parts of it, even Justice, Judgment, and Truth. *These*, says our Lord, *ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

HE did not blame them for their scrupulous Adherence to the Ordinances of their Religion (since these were of God's own Appointment) but for regarding them to the exclusion of Piety and Virtue,---for preferring the Shadow to the Substance, and Appearance to Reality,---for dividing what God had strictly united, and making a Part, the worse Part, to serve for the Whole.

HOWEVER,

SERM.

IX.

HOWEVER, had they gone into the other Extream, and, as is the fashionable Turn our Times have taken, magnified moral Goodness to the Disparagement of Divine Institutions, and set God's *natural* Will in Opposition to his *revealed*, they would not have much mended the Matter, nor escaped the just Censure of the Reformer of the World.

THE Point of Doctrine Christ Jesus had in his Eye, which the faulty Conduct of the Pharisees gave him Occasion to inculcate on them, and which he has left on Record for the Instruction of Mankind, is, that nothing less than an *unlimited universal Obedience* will qualify us for Favour, and entitle us, through his Merits, to a gracious Acceptance here, and to eternal Life hereafter: Not, indeed, such a compleat Conformity to our Rule, as shall be void of every Deviation and free from all Imperfection, but such as in Case of Failure renews itself by a seasonable and hearty Reformation.

To run our Race without a Slip or Stumble, appears to be an Height of Watchfulness and



SERM. Vigour too exalted for the present weak

IX. Capacity of human Nature: Though to obey without Limitation,---to conform our Lives and Actions, in the general Course and Tenour of them, to the Direction of God's Commandments, so as not to persist in the habitual Practice of any known Sin, or the customary Breach of any plain Duty, as this is not above our Power, at least by the Assistance of his Grace; so is it indispensably required of us.

GOD expects from all Men, from Christians especially; that *out of a Conversation* they do *shew forth their good Works*,---that by their holy Behaviour in all Virtue and Godliness of living, they do demonstrate to the World and to themselves the inmost Disposition of their Minds, and by a Train of uniform consistent Performances prove their real Sanctification by the Spirit,---that they do not on any Score make the Divine Laws to be at Variance among themselves,---nor oppose Service to Service, nor pretend to justify the Transgression of some Commands, though it be by a more zealous Attachment to others.

THIS

THIS is the only Obedience, which either *Scripture* or *Reason* gives us any Warrant to venture our Salvation upon, and an Affair of so much Importance calls for a most serious Inspection.

If we consult the former, but with a slight Attention, we shall find this Truth confirmed by a Multitude of Passages therein, That God demands an impartial Compliance with his Will, however notified to us. It is the Language of the Old Testament, *Let thine Eye look right on, and let thine Eye-lids look streight before thee. Ponder the Path of thy Feet, and let thy Ways be established. Turn not to the Right Hand, nor to the Left (a). For then only shall we not be ashamed of entertaining an undue Reliance on God's Acceptance, when we have Respect unto all his Commandments (b).*

OR if any one should conceive, that under the Gospel, a new Covenant of Grace and Mercy, he is indulged a greater Liberty, than was allowed under the Law, that Dispensation of Severity and Terrour; before he suffers such a Prejudice to be too firmly rooted

(a) Prov. iv. 25, 26, 27.

(b) Ps. cxix. 6.

SERM. rooted within him, he ought very coolly to  
 IX. examine, in what Strain the Declarations of  
 the New Testament run. As, *Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity (c).---Abstain from all Appearance, every Kind of Evil (d).---Let us lay aside every Weight (e).---Cleanse yourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of the Lord (f).---And Keep yourselves unspotted from the World (g).* So that every Weight of Guilt, every Stain of Corruption, every thing that looks like Sin, is to be thrown off, and removed at a Distance from us.

AND as a defective Observance of our Maker's Will,---the doing some Things he has enjoined, which shall be reckoned an Equivalent for leaving others undone, or available to Salvation without them, is condemned by unexceptionable Texts of holy Writ, so is it likewise opposite to the entire Scope and Drift, the End and Purport of the Gospel. The Reason of *Christ's appearing in the Flesh was to put away Sin (h)*, but this Notion establishes it :---He was the *Mediator of the New Testament for the Redemption*

(c) 2 Tim. ii 19.

(d) 1 Thess. v. 22.

(e) Heb. xii. 1.

(f) 2 Cor. vii. 1.

(g) St. James ii 27.

(h) Heb. ix. 26.



*redemption of Transgressions* (i), to release us from the Dominion as well as the Punishment of them; but the Doctrine of the Sufficiency of a partial insincere Obedience confirms their Tyranny and our Misery.

*Zacharias* upon the Foresight of the approaching spiritual Deliverance by the Messiah, prophesies (k), in as strong Terms, as if it had been actually accomplished, that *God hath visited and redeemed his People to perform the Mercy promised to our Fathers and to remember his holy Covenant,---that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, might serve him without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him, all the Days of our Life.* And *Christ*, says one Apostle, gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works (l), and not privileged to Evil; and for this Purpose, says another, the Son of God was manifested to destroy the Works, all the Works of the Devil, without Exception or Reserve (m). It were endless to heap together Testimonies to to this Effect; and it is needless, since the most

(i) Heb. ix. 15.

(k) St. Luke i. 68, 75.

(l) Tit. ii. 14.

(m) 1 St. John iii. 8.

SERM. most common Christian among us cannot be

IX. ignorant, that the *Grace of God hath appeared unto all Men*, in and by the Gospel, *teaching them to deny all Ungodliness* (n). What therefore must we conclude other, than that, if we will have any Part or Lot in the Blessings of it, we must live according to our Belief, and give up ourselves to be wholly governed by its Rules and Precepts?

WICKED Men, misled by their Vices, may flatter themselves as they please: But we have the best Foundation from God's infallible Word for believing, that God and Mammon cannot be served acceptably together (o). Nay, our Fellow-creatures scorn our partial Affections and a divided Service; and can we think such an Offering will be agreeable to the God of Heaven? If he has condescended to make our Souls the Temple of his Residence, let us not so heinously affront him, as to erect each one his favourite Idol near him, and pay the most ardent and assiduous Devotion to it: Let us not be deceived, the Almighty will not be mocked: As he has an absolute Title to our whole Obedience, he will not be put off with such a Proportion only, as our Vices can

(n) Tit. ii. 11, 12,

(o) St. Matth. vi. 24.

can spare him; nothing less than an universal Subjection will satisfy the infinite Being, whom we serve. He that will be blameless before him, must walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord (p), and he that will lay hold on eternal Life, must stand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God (q). Be our Lusts as dear to us as a Right Eye or a Right Hand, we must pluck them out, or cut them off, and cast them from us, ere we can enter into Life (r), nor expect, that God will yield to our Intercessions for them. They are in the Number of those Enemies, which the Lord of Hosts has appointed to be utterly rooted out, and if we shew them any Indulgence, our Sentence will be the same as was passed on the King of Israel for letting go the Syrian King devoted to Destruction, *our Lives shall go for them* (s).

SERM.  
IX.

WHAT the Prophet *Malachi* upbraids the Jews with an Account of their faulty material Sacrifices, is very applicable to the defiled spiritual Oblations of Christians. *If ye offer the Blind for Sacrifice, is it not Evil? And if ye offer the Lame and Sick, is it*

(p) St. Luke i. 6.

(q) Col. iv. 12.

(r) St. Math. v. 29, 30.

(s) 1 Kings xx. 42;



SERM. *it not Evil? Offer it now unto thy Gover-*

IX. *nor: Will he be pleased with thee, or accept*

*thy Person (t)?* So if we present the odious

Sacrifice of a polluted Soul, is it not Evil?

Do we not affront, instead of honouring,

the Divine Majesty! And can we, so long

as we persist in the avow'd Omission of

our Duty or Commission of Sin, in a State

of Enmity with God, who cannot but loath

every Transgression, expect to enjoy his Fa-

vour, to obtain his Rewards, or escape his

Punishments? Will he not rather say, *I*

*have no Pleasure in you, neither will I ac-*

*cept an Offering at your Hands (u)?*

UPON the whole then, this Truth must be

admitted for a principal Scripture Doctrine,

that Obedience in numerous Particulars will

be of no Consequence, where there is a

willfull Disobedience in any: And whoever

takes up with so vain a Conceit, will find

himself wretchedly disappointed at the great

Day of Retribution, when the Judge of all

the Earth shall administer true Judgment.

It will be of small Avail at that searching

Conjuncture for such to plead the saving

Efficacy of Christ's Death, as have rejected

the reforming Efficacy of it in their Lives,

and

(t) Malachi i. 8.

(u) V. 10.

and, instead of fulfilling the Conditions, on which the Atonement by his Blood is dispensed, have taken Occasion from it, rather

SERM.  
IX.

to increase than to forsake their Sins. Nothing will then meet with a gracious absolving Sentence, besides the Universality of our religious Performances, which certainly no Man can alledge for himself, who has in any Respect grossly, knowingly, and perseveringly transgressed the Divine Will. No one therefore can upon the Gospel-Terms with just Grounds hope for an Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, who persists in any vicious Habit, or allows himself even in any single Acts of Ungodliness. Both our Creator and his Prophets, and our Redeemer and his Apostles, far from giving Encouragement to so insincere a Christian, have manifestly excluded him from all solid Confidence in God.

AND the Agreeableness of this Decision in the Matter before us to Reason, is as open and visible, as to Scripture. It stands built on very conclusive Arguments drawn from the Divine Attributes and Government.

The Attributes of God are as necessary to him, as his Existence, among which Purity  
and

SERM. and Knowledge are chief, this arising from  
 IX. the Immensity of his Nature, that from the  
 ~~~~~ Rectitude of his Will: Now if God be en-  
 dued with consummate Purity, and his Know-
 ledge be as absolute as his Holiness,---and
 if the one of these Perfections not only
 places him at an infinite Distance from all
 immoral Defilement, but makes him to abhor
 it in every Shape in every one of his Crea-
 tures,---and if the other renders all, even our
 most secret Transactions naked to his View,
 and he cannot but see what he cannot but
 detest: Must not Men's Vices sadly pervert
 their Judgements and darken their Under-
 standings, e're they can persuade themselves
 to think, that he, with whom they have to
 do, will either not censure or not observe
 every moral Defect in them,---will approve
 of, or dispense with, the least Sin, though
 he may, on wise and weighty Considera-
 tions, pardon the greatest?

THEN, with Regard to God's Govern-
 ment, if his all-forming Power vests him with
 an unbounded Jurisdiction over the whole Uni-
 verse, where is the Person, where is the Action
 exempt from its directing Influence? If God's
 Right to lay his Commands upon us be
 universal, our Obligations to fulfill them
 must

must be so too: We are not to pick and cull out what Precepts we choose to regard; the Enacting Force is the same in all the Divine Laws; nor does one bind our Consciences more strongly than another.

SERM.
IX.

MEN may, out of private Views, connive at some Sorts of Wickedness; but God will not, we may say, he cannot, it being subversive of his Authority, as well as repugnant to his Nature. No one Sin will ever find any Counterance from him; much less will he divest himself of his supreme Dominion, by opening a Passage for an overflowing Torrent of Ungodliness: And yet this must be the Consequence of his shewing the least Approbation of a partial Subjection.

EVIL Men would presently catch at so signal an Indulgence, and every one pronounce in Favour of his own most agreeable Corruption; by which Means not a few Enormities would be encouraged, but all: And what can tend more to the Establishment of a general wide-spreading Debauchery? What can more powerfully tempt Men to charge God with being, if not the Author, yet the Promoter of Sin?

X

WHEN

SERM. WHEN Vice comes recommended with so
 IX. high a Sanction, the Reverse of the Question, *who can be saved?* put by the Apostles to their Lord (x), will be most proper to be asked: For upon this Footing, who cannot be saved? There being perhaps no one so far sunk in Wickedness, but he performs the Will of God in some Respects, at least as far as in the outward Action which the Law requires, tho' he transgresses it in others, St. Peter enquires not for his own Information, but ours, *What shall be the End of them, that obey not the Gospel of God, and where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear (y)?* intimating the dreadful Expectation such must harbour of the Day of Judgment. But all Apprehension of Danger is without Foundation, if the same Person may at the same Time be both righteous and wicked, God's Friend and the World's: Who is there on this Supposition, that may not appear at the awful Tribunal of Christ with the greatest Assurance of Acquittal?

LET those then, that will be deluded, be deluded, and let those, that are filthy, be filthy still, amusing themselves with empty Hopes, till Despair irretrievably lays hold on them,

(x) St. Mark x. 26,

(y) 1 St. Pet. iv. 17, 18,

them, and their Destruction pours upon them SERM.
 like a Whirlwind. But let us, having our IX.
 Understandings enlightened by the Truth, 
 attend to the Things, which accompany Sal-
 vation. We know, who hath said, *the Friend-*
ship of the World is Enmity with God,-----
Cleanse your Hands, ye Sinners, and purify
your Hearts, ye double Minded (z). And if
 Revelation tells us, that *no Murthurer hath*
eternal Life abiding in him (a), Reason will
 draw this indisputable Consequence, that every
 other notorious Offender in any the like
 single Instance, whilst he remains impeni-
 tent, must be alienated from the Life of
 Grace, and will be shut out, if he dies
 without Repentance, from the Life of Glory.
 It matters not in what Particular he of-
 fends; the Guilt is the same, though the
 Crimes may be different. Sin is the Trans-
 gression of God's Law, and *every Transgres-*
sion shall receive a just Recompence of Re-
ward (b). It will be punished in the Per-
 son of the Sinner, or has been in the Per-
 son of the Saviour. But we are assured,
 that the Atonement of Christ's Death will
 be beneficial only to those, who, as they
 believe on the Notification of the Gospel

X 2

unto

(z) St. James iv. 4, 8.

(a) 1 St. John iii. 15.

(b) Heb. ii. 2.

SERM. unto them, so also repent and amend their
 IX. respective Mis-doings, *through the Knowledge*
 of him, that hath called us to Glory and
 Virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding
 great and precious Promises, that by these
 we might be Partakers of the Divine Nature,
 having escaped the Corruption, that is in the
 World through Lust (c). For Christ died
 for all, that they, which live, should not
 henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him
 who died for them (d).

BUT to themselves do they in a very
 remarkable Manner live, who serve God no
 further than they please. Their own Appe-
 tite or Humour is consulted, and not his
 Will. They are in the worst Sense a Law
 unto themselves: And as some idolize their
 Reason by crediting God's Word only so
 far as they can account for every Truth it
 discovers, so these do the same by their
 Passions, taking every Practice to be justi-
 fiable, which they approve. And what is
 this, besides a flying off from their Alle-
 giance to God, and the setting up of an
 Independency on their Maker? It is not
 only Undutifulness, but Rebellion;---an im-
 pious Attempt to dethrone the Almighty;---
 a bold

(c) 2 St. Pet. i. 3, 4.

(d) 2 Cor. v. 15.

a bold Invasion of his Prerogative, as the SERM.
 sole Lawgiver ;--and an arrogant Claim of IX.
 Right to cancel the Divine Laws at Pleasure? 

OR if Men do not thus profanely vindicate the voluntary Defects in their religious Services, yet they are apt to excuse a Failure in themselves from as bad a Principle ;--if they do not deny God's sovereign Pre-eminence and absolute Government over them, yet they are inclined to fancy, that he will fondly wave his Privilege in Regard to them. They are in their own Opinion the Favourites of Heaven, God's chosen People, in whom he will see no Iniquity ;--they maintain that by Virtue of their Election they are, not under a Covenant, which they may break or they may perform, not barely in a State of Salvation, which they may work out, or may forfeit, but actually and irreversibly saved, so as to leave no Possibility of a Miscarriage, be their Behaviour never so unworthy of it. This they pronounce themselves sure of from their own inward Feelings and Experiences ; so that no Reasoning can reach them,--no Scripture can convince them ; and there seems a fairer Prospect of recovering to a right Mind the daring Sinner, than the imaginary Saint.

SERM.

IX.

THE one transgresses under a fixed Persuasion, that his Misconduct is not offensive, nor can affect his Title to Happiness; a fatal Error, which must effectually prevent his striving to do better. The other is sensible of his Faults even at the Time he commits them, and is tempted to commit them only with the uncertain Hopes, that he shall not be condemned for them: But as he may easily be brought to apprehend his Danger as well as his Guilt, it seems not very difficult to reduce such a Wanderer into the right Way. Where the Mistake lies in the Judgment, it takes the deeper Root, the more it is dwelt upon,---though where the Irregularity proceeds from the Affections, the Man is more open to Conviction, and by a tolerable Measure of Thought and Application likely to discern the Absurdity of supposing, that the most Holy will in his particular Case allow that Action to be innocent, on which he has set an indelible Mark of his Displeasure.

To what has been already urged from Reason, we have this additional Argument against a partial Obedience; that it not only leads to an universal Corruption, but also
does

does it give Occasion to the making every SERM. Sin exceeding sinful. When the Lusts and IX. Passions are permitted to range at large, and to be solicited by every occurring Gratification, they serve as Checks and Restraints to one another,---eager to take different Roads, and drawing off in contrary Directions, they retard their own Progress, and are many times hindered from too excessive an Indulgence. But when a few gain the Superiority, and have either subdued the rest, or brought them into their Interest, must they not have Power to run greater Lengths of Malignity? And the more so, when it is likewise taken for granted, that there is no Harm done in pursuing a favourite Lust,---gratifying a darling Passion,---neglecting a troublesome Duty; and that God will be satisfied with any Remains of Service. What in such a Case shall prevent Men from being as wicked as they desire, if they may safely give a Loose to an admired Temptation (which is all the Generality are fond of) and yet secure God's Love and Esteem by obeying him in those Instances, in which they have no Inclination to transgress? And must not the End of this be, that the Sin, which doth so easily beset each of us, shall absolutely

SERM. overcome us, and make us Slaves to it beyond Redemption?

IX.

BUT after all, what Necessity is there for hunting far abroad for Evidence in the Affair upon Trial, when the Criminals are so very forward to appear as Witnesses against one another? Every one readily sees the dangerous Guilt of any sinful Practice in the Person of his Neighbour, whilst he is so prepossessed in his own Favour, as to fancy an Exemption for himself. Let Offenders speak their Sentiments of others, and they will be sure to give a right Testimony, though a vicious Self-love as surely leads them to represent Things wrong, where they are most interested in a right Representation.

THUS, should the Covetous be asked his Opinion of Prodigality, he would not hesitate to declare, that it was deservedly condemned as a mis-spending of our Talent, and an Abuse of the Divine Bounty, and that it fit Poverty should come on such Persons as on one that travelleth, and their Wants as an armed Man (e). On the other Hand, should we desire the Prodigal to speak his Thoughts

(e) Prov. xxiv. 34.

Thoughts of Covetousness, he would at once SERM.
 answer, that St. Paul himself has styled it *Ido-* IX.
latry (f),---that it is a Vice hateful to God
 and Man, and that it cannot and ought not
 to escape the Vengeance of Heaven. Move
 the Adulterer to discover his Mind in Re-
 lation to Dishonesty in Trade and Dealing,
 and one may engage for his acknowledging,
 that *the Lord is the Avenger of all such as*
go beyond or defraud their Brother in any
Matter (g). And that his Justice is con-
 spicuous in nothing more, than in punishing
 Injustice,---in denouncing a severe *Woe on him*
that buildeth his House by Unrighteousness and
his Chambers by Wrong (h). Put the Ques-
 tion to the griping Oppressor concerning Adul-
 tery, and he will very honestly pronounce
 upon it, that *Uncleanness* is a Crime, which
 ought not to be named, with so much as the
 least Approbation, among Saints (i),---that
 nothing can be more contrary to the Divine
 Purity,---that under the Jewish Law it was
 justly punished with Death (k), and that if
 the Guilty meet with a milder temporal Pu-
 nishment under the Gospel, yet there will
 come a Time, when they shall more severe-
 ly smart for their Enormities; for *Whore-*
mongers

(f) Col. iii. 5.

(g) 1 Theff. iv. 6.

(h) Jer. xxii. 13.

(i) Ephes. v. 3.

(k) Lev. xx. 10.

SERM. mongers and Adulterers God will judge (l).

IX. So again, let us but ask the Gluttonous and the Drunken, what they think of the Envious and Malicious, and they will not scruple to tell us, that such Wretches have a very near Resemblance of the Parent of all Evil, and that the foul Crimes they are addicted to, are peculiarly reckoned to be the Works of the Devil,---or, should we ask the Envious and Malicious what Judgment was to be passed upon the Gluttonous and the Drunken, they will freely pronounce them fit Objects of God's Wrath, and fairly ranked among such Sinners, as *shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (m)*. In the same Way of thinking of each other are the Hypocrite and the Profane, This being charged with living without God in the World, and That with disowning his Attributes, if not denying his Existence. And in Fact a wicked Person is rarely to be met with, who will not peremptorily sentence all other Sins besides his own to Condemnation, yet blinded by a partial Fondness for himself, speaks Peace to his own Mind; tho' he confesses, that as to all the World of ungodly Men *else there is no Peace, as saith the Lord, unto the Wicked (n)*.

BUT

(l) Heb. xiii. 4.

(m) 1 Cor. vi. 10.

(n) Isai. xlvi. 22.

SERM.

IX.

BUT what a miserable Delusion is this? Is the Sinner more out of Danger because he shuts his Eyes and will not see it? Shall his Opinion be depended on, when it is shamefully byassed, as often as his own Case is the Subject of Debate or Consideration, and free only, when delivered on his Neighbour's Practice? He should rather more wisely reflect, that Truth and Falshood are not left to his modeling, and that what is a reasonable Determination on any given Breach of God's Law is equally right on every other, which can be named.

INSTEAD therefore of censuring others, let him condemn himself, and never suppose his spiritual State better than theirs, as long as his Behaviour is in any Respect as unjustifiable. It is not this or that Offence, which God hates, but Sin in general; all the Works of Darknes are an Abomination unto him, nor can there a more fatal Imagination be entertained than for any of us to flatter ourselves with escaping the Divine Displeasure, without renouncing them all.

AND now if those, who content themselves with paying a defective Submission to
the

SERM. the known Will of God, are condemned in

IX.

Scripture, by Reason, and out of the Mouths of one another, enough seems to have been urged to check the Presumption of the Bold, and persuade them to harbour more diffident Thoughts on the Safety of their spiritual Condition: Though something further may be needful, and Compassion calls for it, to remove the Doubts of the Scrupulous,---Doubts, which perhaps have arisen from mistaking the true Nature of Christian Obedience; and ought to be cleared up, that such as in all Appearance stand fairest for Acceptance, may not conceive themselves to be the farthest from it.

THE Service, indeed, required of the Faithful under the New Covenant, is and must be unlimited and universal; there is no Duty which may designedly be neglected, no Offence which may wilfully be committed; and yet the Obedience paid may be far from being perfect and unerring. And should no Man have a Place in his Maker's Esteem, but he who is entirely innocent and unspotted with any Sin, it is certain, that no one can enjoy it at all. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin (o), and if we say, that we have none, we deceive ourselves, and the*

(o) Gal. iii. 22.

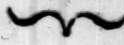
the Truth is not in us (p). The Gospel according- SERM.
 cordingly, which is a System of reconciling IX.
 Goodness, is truly adapted to the present
 Debility and Corruption of our Nature.--We
 are beset with Frailties, and over-run with
 Foulnesses; and it is impossible for us not
 to transgress either ignorantly or inadvert-
 tently.

Such Transgressions, it must be confessed,
 are sufficient to take away the Merit of a
 sinless Demeanour, so that we cannot demand
 Salvation, as our Due; however, we are
 encouraged humbly to hope for it through
 the Satisfaction of Christ Jesus. And though
 God does not afford the least Countenance
 to Sin, still he pities our involuntary Fail-
 ings;----he has promised to deal with us
 more like a tender Father, than a rigorous
 Master, nor will he be extreme to mark
 what is done amiss, where the Offence flows
 not so much from the Perverseness of our
 Choice, as the Degeneracy of our Condition.

NOTHING will be charged upon us, or
 brought into our future Account, except
 what we have purposely shut our Eyes against,
 or have knowingly done, or might by a
 proper

SERM. proper Vigilance have prevented ;---Nothing,

IX. but what by our own Endeavours and God's

 Assistance might have been performed : And so long as we are sensible of Uprightness of Heart and Purity of Intention, we may safely conclude ourselves to be in a State of Christian Perfection, the Perfection of Sincerity ; although we are at the same Time conscious, that we do not stand clear of every, even the lowest Degree of Wandering from the Track marked out to us.

ALL Carelessness in a Matter of such vast Importance, has, notwithstanding, its certain Proportion of Guilt. It is the Part of a Christian to be always on the improving Hand, daily gaining Ground of his natural Depravities, and making one Success over them to follow close on the Heels of another. We must be ever advancing towards that Fullness of Virtue, which is necessary to the Fullness of Joy, though neither the one nor the other can possibly be reached in this World ; and as we grow in Years, we must grow in Goodness, the divine Life being equally progressive with the human.

BUT if we become indolent and remiss, and for want of a right Application we incur, what we might well have avoided, in
such

such Circumstances, we shall in vain think SERM.
 to screen ourselves under the Cover of In- IX.
 firmity; since the Disobedience here plainly
 springs from a Root of Willfulness rather
 than Weakness, and argues a manifest Con-
 tempt of the Almighty, and Disregard of the
 Obligations, we are under to execute his
 Commands to the uttermost of our Power.
 The most inflamed Love of God is expected
 to be the reigning Principle of our Souls,
 and whilst it is so, we shall not lightly of-
 fend him, nor will he be easily offended
 with us, though we should happen to
 transgress, as the best often may and do,
 in a Way very consistent with such an ele-
 vated Affection.

So far forth, as we fall short of a studious
 Enquiry into the Divine Will,---of a jealous
 Diligence to practice it,---of a regular Watch-
 fulness against the Breaches of it, our Pre-
 tences of Ignorance, Infirmary, or Surprise
 will by no Means excuse us, our Miscon-
 duct is too evident in either of those Omis-
 sions, and expressly contrary to the plainest
 Injunctions of holy Writ; *That ye be not*
slothful, but be Followers of them, who through
Faith and Patience inherit the Promises (q),
 that

(q) Heb. vi. 12.

SERM. that as ye have receiv'd, how ye ought to
 IX. walk and to please God, so ye would abound
 more and more (r), and that ye would walk
 worthy of God, who hath called you to his
 Kingdom and Glory (s), worthy of the Lord
 unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every
 good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge
 of God (t).

WHEREAS these Directions vigorously prosecuted will secure us from Evil, and preserve us blameless unto the Kingdom of Heaven: Especially as they must prevent our sleeping on Duty,---our becoming idle, when we have full Employment upon our Hands,---or even making too light of the Inadvertencies, we are subject to. For an Offence does not lose its whole Malignity by being undesigned; it is still odious to God, and cannot be quite innocent, though it may not be imputed. No true Christian consequently acts in Character, who does not exert himself in the gradual Conquest of his very Infirmities, and place a double Guard, where he is by Nature or Custom weakest. If he neglects these Miscarriages, as slight and trivial, they will come in Time
 to

(r) 1 Theff. iv. 1:

(s) 1 Theff. ii. 12.

(t) Coloss. i. 10.

to wear a different Face, and be changed
into great and heinous Crimes. SERM.
IX.

BUT admitting, that there is no Room to distrust God's loving Kindness on the Score of any accidental Backslidings, where no proper Caution is wanting to guard against them; What Notion shall we entertain of such Sins, as are apparently willful and premeditated? Can they plead any Title to Indulgence? Rather, is not the ill Desert in this Case too glaring to be concealed, too notorious to be palliated? Obstinate Sinners are beyond all Dispute in a State of Enmity with God, be their Transgressions more or fewer, nor can he be reconciled to them, so long as in any of their Ways they choose to run counter to his Will.

HOWEVER, though their Condition be hazardous, it is not altogether desperate; and though Destruction lies before them, and they will surely rush into it, if they proceed, yet they may stop their Course, and change their Road, and get from the Highway leading to Death into the Path of everlasting Life. It is the peculiar Excellency of Christ's Religion, *who came to seek and to save that*

Y

which

SERM. *which was left* (u), both to call Men into

IX. this blessed Path, and to conduct them in it,--

to invite them by Repentance to forsake the dreadful Way they are in, and to renew them by Grace in the Spirit of their Minds.

HENCE it comes to pass, that, under the Gospel, and by the efficacious Atonement of an infinite Saviour, Sin, which is always ruinous in its Nature, is not always destructive in its Effects; and though *when it is finished, it bringeth forth Death* (x), still its deadly Qualities may be corrected, and its pernicious Fruits blasted. The mighty Conqueror, who has subdued both these dreadful Enemies, will rescue us out of their Hands, if we are wise enough to return to the Post, which we have deserted, and for the future fight manfully under his Banner. If, after Examination into our past Lives devoutly made, we diligently pursue the proposed End and Design of it, by an humble Confession to God of all the Faults we can charge ourselves with on the Review,---by a contrite Sorrow for them,---by an earnest Supplication of Forgiveness,---by a firm Resolution of forsaking them,---and, to crown all, by an immediate actual Amendment, we have this comfortable Hope permitted

us,

(u) St. Luke xix. 10.

(x) St. James i. 15.

us, that *in the Righteousness, we shall have* SERM.
done, we shall live, we shall not die (y). IX.

IF we do not make Shipwreck of the Faith by Apostacy, as well as of a good Conscience by Immorality, we may still retrieve our Affairs. Be our religious Circumstances never so low, we ought not to give ourselves over for lost,---whilst any Remains of Spiritual Life are left, our Recovery is possible,---we may obtain God's Pardon for what is past, on exercising a right Faith, and stedfastly resolving to do better,---may regain his former Love by a more regular Obsequiousness for the Time to come,---and may serve him with a quiet Mind, a Mind free from the Terror of any foregoing Guilt, and the Dread of any subsequent Punishment, if we are industrious to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance* (z).

So that no actual, no habitual Crimes should tempt us to despair of Mercy ; unless we are so monstrously disengenuous, as to make this an Handle for our retaining them, and to *continue in Sin, that Grace may abound* (a). For then, indeed, we make
 Y 2 ourselves.

(y) Ezek. xviii. 17.

(z) St. Matth. iii. 8.

(a) Rom. vi. 1.

SERM. ourselves Vessels of God's Wrath, not of his

IX. Love,---we vilely pervert the Ways of the

Lord,-----we promote Wickedness by the Means appointed to suppress it,---we cease to be Christ's living Members, nor are we Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

LET us not then deceive ourselves, nor be deceived by our Vices in so momentous a Concern, where every Mistake is dangerous, and may be fatal. God looks for an unlimited Submission to his Commands; there are no Points of Duty, of which it may not be truly said, *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*: And if he has engaged to receive reforming Criminals with a compassionate Tenderness, Let us learn to improve the Mercy according to his Purpose by renouncing as completely as possible every evil Work, and labouring to perfect Holiness in the Fear of the Lord.

WE must not think to compound Matters with God: He will suffer no Rival in our Hearts, but expects, that we should in all Things be his by Choice, as we are always his by Right. *Little Children, says St. John, let*

no Man deceive you : He that doth Righteousness, universally and without Reserve, is righteous, even as he, his Saviour and Advocate, is righteous : He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil (b). He that saith, he abideth in the Son of God, ought himself so also to walk, even as he walked : And now, little Children, abide in him ; that when he shall appear, we may have Confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming (c).

Here is the Course we are to take, here is the Example we are to follow ; and if on a Search into our past Lives seriously made, we find, that we have applied ourselves to imitate the one, and to pursue the other, either from the Days of our Youth, or the Time of our Conversion, we may rest persuaded, that we are in a State of Grace and Reconciliation.

SERM.
IX.

FROM which let nothing draw us off, nor remove our Integrity from us. We know our Rule and our Pattern, by which we shall at last be tried ; by these let us now frequently try and examine ourselves, always correcting what we find wrong, always improving what we see to be right within

Y 3

us,

(b) 1 St. John iii. 7, 8.

(c) 1 St. John ii. 6, 28.

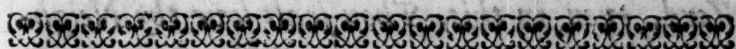
SERM. us, and never forgetting, that *except our*
IX. *Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness*
of the Scribes and Pharisees whom our Lord
taxes with a partial Obedience, we shall in
no wise enter into the Kingdom of Hea-
ven (d).

(d) St. Matth v. 20.





S E R M O N X.



Gal. vi. 9.

*Let us not be weary in well-doing;
for in due Season we shall reap,
if we faint not.-----*



HOEVER carefully peruses SERM.
X.
the foregoing Part of this Epistle, cannot fail to remark how much the sacred Author was obliged to trespass upon his own Modesty, and to vindicate his Apostleship and Doctrine from the vile Aspersions of various Slanderers, who through his Sides aimed a deadly Blow at the Heart of Christianity itself.

AGAINST these he first argues with the utmost Strength and Conviction, and then

sets

SERM. sets himself, as he had pulled down what

X.

was faulty in their Building, to erect what was useful and ornamental in his own, by enforcing the general and necessary Duties of Christianity.----To those who declared so strongly in favour of the Jewish Religion, he urges, that *all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself (a)*, i. e. All the Commandments of *Moses* touching our Neighbour are summed up in our tender Regards and corresponding Actions towards him; whereto he adds, *It is a vain Thing* for any to boast of their Attachments to the Law, and at the same Time overthrow the grand Design of it, by their Heats and Animosities against each other; which can neither preserve the Honour due to their Religion, nor themselves in Quiet and Safety. For *if ye bite and devour one another, take Heed that ye be not consumed one of another (b)*.

AND to their relative Obligations, he subjoins the Enforcement of their Duty to themselves, and exhorts them to *walk in the Spirit*, for then they should *not fulfill the Lust of the Flesh (c)* Now the Works of the Flesh

(a) Gall. v. 14.

(b) V. 15.

(c) V. 16.

are manifest ; which our Apostle enumerates, SERM. and asserts, what they blinded with Passion, X. and exasperated with Divisions, were not duly apprized of, that *Hatred, Variance, Strife, Emulations, Wraths, Envyings, and Herefies,* are as truly the Works of the Flesh, as *Adultery, Fornication, Lasciviousness, Murther, Drunkenness, and such like,* and render a Man altogether as much unqualified for the Mercies of the Gospel : Of the which he forewarns them again, as he had declared unto them in Time past, *that they which do such Things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (d).*

HOWEVER, that the Disciples might not be betrayed into an Opinion of thinking, that they had come up to the Character of good Christians by their abstaining only from Evil, St. Paul lets them know, that it was required of them likewise to do Good and to abound in *the Fruit of the Spirit*, which is *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance (e).* And these Virtues he again, in the Verses preceding our Text, recommends from the Consideration of the Certainty of our being recompensed according to our Deeds;

(d) Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

(e) V. 23.

SERM. Deeds; which he introduces with this Cau-

X.

tion: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption: But he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting (f). The last End to which all Things in this World tend, is something carnal; but the Principle and the Tendency of the next are wholly spiritual.--- He, that soweth to the Flesh,---he, who consults only his present Interest upon Earth, his Crop shall be answerable to his Seed,---he may reap temporal Advantages proportionable to his Pains and Industry, yet the utmost Produce of all his Labour can be but of a short-lived Duration, all earthly Things being of a transient and corruptible Nature: For he that soweth to the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption.

But he that soweth to the Spirit,---he, who has his Mind settled on the Rewards of another State, and conducts himself so far by Faith and not by Sight, that he can cheerfully forego an immediate Enjoyment, and bury it, as it were under-ground, casting it in like Seed into the Earth, in Hopes
of

(f) Gal. vi. 7, 8.

of a future plentiful Harvest, how much so-
ever he may be censured for his Improvi-
dence and Credulity by the short-sighted
Men of this World, still shall receive an
abundant Increase of, and meet with a glo-
rious Recompense for, all his patient Conti-
nuance in well-doing, in the Blessings of the
World to come. For *he, that soweth to the
Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlast-
ing.*---These Things being so, *Let us not be
weary in well-doing, for in due Season we
shall reap, if we faint not.*

HERE is the encouraging Doctrine, which
St. Paul would deduce from the Whole:
And, it seems to be doing an Injury to his
Argument to limit it, as some have done,
to a single though principal Member, when
he plainly applies it to the compleat Body
of Christian Duties. They, who interpret
Well-doing to signify Charity alone, appa-
rently look upon this as a detached Sen-
tence, unconnected with the rest of the
Epistle; whereas from the cursory View,
I have given of it, it evidently stands as an
Inference from the Premises, and contains
an Exhortation to an unbounded Perseverance
in all good Works.

SERM.

X.

IN this general Sense I shall here understand it, and consider as well what our Apostle insinuates, together with the bad Consequences thereof, as what he persuades to, and the most prevailing Motives he urges to enforce it.

WHAT is insinuated or supposed, is, that Men are apt to grow weary in well-doing; a Charge too justly grounded to be denied. So great is the Frailty of human Nature in its sad State of universal Degeneracy, and so utterly averse from conforming itself to the Good-will and Pleasure of Almighty God, that without the Divine Assistance enabling us to keep a steady Eye on such Encouragements as God has promised to our Constancy, we shall be frequently inclined to faint in our Course, and grow tired of our Work: Every Temptation will foil us, will retard our Progress, and slacken our Industry, or turn us out of the right Way, and betray us to the grand Enemy of our Salvation.

THAT such must be our Condition in a State of Nature may certainly be concluded, since even under Grace, when Men are entitled

titled to God's mighty Aid, they too often SERM.
neglect to make the expected Improvements X.
of it, and having begun in the Spirit, aim
at nothing so earnestly as to be perfected
in the Flesh. They sleep when they should
watch,----yield where they should resist,----
and loiter away idly those Hours, which
are appointed for Labour. Either they have
not a firm Confidence in God, and are afraid
of not receiving at last the promised Fruits
of a persevering Diligence, or else they de-
spise them, and have no Relish for any be-
sides worldly and sensual Pleasures, tho' the
one discovers a most vitiated Taste, as the
other a most impious Distrust.

MUCH Reason then had *St. Paul* to found
his Exhortation to a Continuance in well-do-
ing, on the Supposal of Mens Proneness
to discontinue it. For which he had not
only the Experience of his own Times, but
the History of the former, and might fairly
conclude as to the future, that ordinary Chri-
stians would be in danger of feeling the like
Weariness and Faintness, since the most emi-
nent and holy of God's Servants, whose
Faith, and Patience, and Piety are recorded
for an Example to all Posterity, have in
their Defects of this Kind prov'd themselves

to

SERM. to be Persons subject to the same Infirmi-
 X. ties as others.

Thus, the Man after God's own Heart, when he saw the Prosperity of the Wicked, that they were not in Trouble like other Men, nor plagued like other Men,---that they carried on their Designs smoothly, and were not brought into any immediate Danger by the Crimes they had committed,---that they had an uninterrupted and continued Course of temporal Success, and were not called to a speedy Account for their Blaphemies, and their daring Provocations against God,---he, observing these Events, and finding Things to be far otherwise with him, that he was plagued all the Day long, and chastened every Morning, bursts out into this hasty and desponding Exclamation, *Verily I have cleansed my Heart in vain, and washed my Hands in Innocency (g).*

SUCH is the Weakness of human Resolution, that if they do not presently find the Encouragement in doing their Duty which they promise themselves, if all things succeed not according to their sanguine Expectations, they are ready many Times to cry out in the

the Words of the prophane King of *Israel*; SERM.
What should I wait for the Lord any longer (b)? Though disposed to be vigorous and active enough to prosecute an ungodly Cause, they are quickly tired in their Christian Race, nor can they be prevailed on to finish it, even for a Crown of Glory. This Weariness are they subject to in the Point of doing well, and how much more in the Point of suffering Evil?

AND that we have much more Reason to fear and to be doubtful of our own Strength, than to be high minded, and confident we have too many Instances, besides, probably, our own Experience to convince us.

If we look back into Antiquity, we shall find the great *Abraham* himself so remarkable for his strong Faith and steady Obedience, to be ranked in the Number of those who have not in all Cases stood their Ground: For though he could most wonderfully signalize himself by his neither staggering at his Promise of having a Son, through Unbelief, made to him at an Age, which rendered it highly improbable that he should beget one, and impossible that his
 Wife

(b) 2 Kings vi. 33.

SERM. Wife should conceive one, humanly speaking
 IX. and according to the Course of Nature,
 nor stumbling at the trying Command of
 sacrificing that Son, through Disobedience,
 yet this Father of the Faithful coming
 among Strangers, upon some Apprehensions
 that his Life might be in Danger, should
 he openly acknowledge *Sarah* to be what
 in Reality she was, not only his Kinswoman,
 but his Wife, his Heart failed him, and he
 dissembled first with *Pharoah*, and afterwards
 with *Abimeleck*.

BUT observable above all is the Behaviour
 of pious *Job*, celebrated to a Proverb for
 his Patience; he, we find grew weary of his
 Constancy, nor could he prevail on himself
 to wait God's Time for Relief without
 this perverse repining. *O that I might*
have my Request, and that God would grant
me the Thing that I long for, even that it
would please God to destroy me. And again,
What is my Strength that I should hope?
And, Oh! that one would hear me, behold,
my Desire is, that the Almighty would answer
me, and that my Adversary had written a
Book.

NOR

SERM.

X.

NOR can we well overlook the faint-heartedness of the blessed Apostles in shamefully deserting their dear Lord and Saviour at the critical Season of his being apprehended, they had very zealously engaged to stand by him at all Events, and rather to die with him than deny him, and yet, when they were put to the Trial, they every one forsook him and fled to secure their Lives, and shewed not the least Regard for his.

Now all these Things were written for our Admonition, and afford us this instructive Lesson, that he who thinketh he standeth, should take Heed lest he fall (*b*). If Persons of the most exemplary Characters have found the Flesh to be weak tho' the Spirit was willing, and whilst they approved what was Good, have experienced Evil to be present with them, in how much more Danger must we be of flying off from the Bent of Virtue, and growing weary of well-doing? We are taught from these Scripture Instances of Back-sliding, the vicious Byass of our Nature, not to discourage, but to animate us, to keep us alert and vigilant in our Station, and if by our Indolence and

Z Sloth

(*b*) 1 Cor. x. 12.

SERM. Sloth we decline from our Stedfastness, and
X. are led into Temptation, let us not think
to justify our Faults by the Faults of others,
much less that we go about to excuse ourselves by accusing God, as though he tempted us to Evil; because he did not restrain us from it by Violence, when he does sufficiently enable us to restrain ourselves: A little Consideration will enable us to throw the Blame where it ought to fall.

As often as we perceive an incoherent Mixture of Virtue and Vice in our Lives, our own Hearts cannot but upbraid us. Dissatisfaction must be the present Fruits of being religious only by Fits and Starts, where Humour or Interest, and not Conscience is the ruling Principle. To have been innocent is a sharp Sting of Guilt, and the Reflection on our past Piety, Temperance and Charity is only then uncomfortable, when we find ourselves to be in a contrary Disposition.

If we did run well, what should induce us to give over? Is the Difficulty greater to go on than to make our Progress so far? Or were we formerly mistaken in our Opinion of the Worth and Importance of Things?
Are

Are our Souls less valuable now than here- SERM.
 tofore? Or in less danger of Sin when we X.
 indulge it, than when we avoided it? Is the
 Nature and Tendency of Good and Evil
 changed? Or do we even think them so?
 If we cannot answer any of these Questions
 in a Way satisfactory to our Minds, how
 must we be disquieted, as often as we wholly
 consider them, and at the same time con-
 sider, that the right Answers bear exceed-
 ing hard upon us.

NEITHER is this the worst Consequence
 which flows from our Weariness in well-
 doing, as it cannot please us, so will not
 God take Pleasure in it. He expects that
 we maintain our Ground, at all Times and
 on all Occasions, and move on in a con-
 sistent uniform Obedience. What he has
 made our Duty at first, the same or greater
 Degrees of it remain our Duty at last; we
 must end as we have begun, and not fancy
 that a Life, in part only well spent, will
 intitle us to Acceptance, or that we shall
 continue in his Love unless we are con-
 stant in doing his Commandments.

BUT those are got into a Strain of pro-
 fane Jestings, who talk of balancing Accounts

SERM. with their Maker, and setting their preceding
 X. good Deed against their subsequent bad ones.

For, can God be made a Debtor by our best Actions, or can these merit an Acquittal for our Offences? The Almighty, it is true, is graciously pleased, out of his great Goodness and Compassion to our Infirmities, to admit us, in case of our starting aside thro' Faintness and Irresolution to Terms of Pardon and Reconciliation on our Repentance and Recovery, on our rousing up our Spirits and exerting our Strength; and to this must we quicken ourselves by his Help, in Proportion to the Degrees of our Transgression, and the Time and Ground we have lost, that we may be able to satisfy both God and our own Hearts of our Sincerity, and to arrive at a just Measure of Steadfastness in the remaining Part of our Course, otherwise we are not permitted to hope, that we shall conclude it with Joy; *For he only that endureth to the End, the same shall be saved (i).*

If we do not push vigorously onwards, and lengthen out our Progress in Religion with our Lives,---If we do not, when at any time we fall, immediately rise again, mend

mend our Pace, and look well to our go- SERM.
ings, but rather cherish an idle lazy Hu- X.
mour, till we are perfectly indisposed to spi-
ritual Motion, fancying, that we have already
done enough to deserve God's Favour, and
that our former good Work will carry us
to Heaven; at our own Peril must we en-
tertain Sentiments so ill grounded, and pro-
secute so airy a Scheme.

God's Declarations are point-blank against
us, when, as he denounces by his Prophet,
*The Righteous turneth away from his Righteous-
ness and committeth Iniquity and doth according
to all the Abominations that the Wicked Man
doth, all his Righteousness that he hath done
shall not be mentioned, in his Trespas that he
hath trespassed, and in his Sin that he hath
sinned, in them shall he die (k).* And by
his Apostle, *If after they have escaped the
Pollutions of the World, through Knowledge of
the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are
again entangled therein and overcome, the lat-
ter End is worse with them than the Be-
ginning. For it had been better for them
not to have known the Way of Righteousness,
than after they have known it, to turn from the
holy Commandment delivered unto them (l).*

Z 3

THESE

(k) Ezek. xviii. 24.

(l) 2 St. Pet. ii. 20, 21.

SERM.

X.

THESE Passages are too clear to be eluded, and too strong to be withstood. They abundantly discover the bad Consequences of being *weary in well-doing*, that we shall not only suffer for our Revolt from our Engagements, but suffer the more severely for it.---It is agreeable to the Divine Justice to adapt Punishments to Crimes; and if a visible Defection from the Ways of Holiness be the greatest Crime we can be guilty of, abating downright Apostacy, doth it not fairly call for the greatest Punishment?---And what can be a more heinous Procedure than this? Is it not to resist the Holy Ghost, who had conducted us so far, and would have carried us through all the Difficulties which opposed our Progress? Is it not to *count the Blood of the Covenant an unholy or common Thing*, which we will not be at the Pains to secure a lasting Interest in? Is it not to bring up an evil Report against the True Religion which we have discarded in Practice, though we may retain it in Profession? And is it not to bring our Neighbours, as well as our own Guilt upon our Heads, by throwing a Stumbling-block in their Way, by tempting the Weak and hardening the Wicked? Any one of these Circumstances

Circumstances is a considerable Aggravation SERM. X.
of Sin; but with how great Force must
their united Weight fall on the Deserter
from his Duty?---To be a Preservative
against the Evil which results from our
being weary in well-doing, the Exhortation
of the Apostle is urged upon us in the
Text, and enforced by the most prevailing
Motive, *for in due Season we shall reap, if we
faint not.*

THE Certainty of Success is the chief
Inducement to Labour, and where that is
precarious, this is most deservedly slackened.
But though this Rule be very reasonable,
it is yet not too constantly followed; Men
often throwing away their Time and Care
on those Things in which it is very doubt-
ful if ever they have their Pains rewarded.---
It is an old and experienced Observation,
that *all Things in the Event of worldly Affairs
happen alike to all, the Race is not to the
Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong (m).*---
And this led many of the Antients who
were unacquainted with the revealed Dis-
covery of a future State to conclude, though
very absurdly, that there was no supreme Di-
rector watching over and ordering the tempo-
ral Concerns of Men. THESE

(m) Eccles. ix. 11.

SERM.

X.

THESE short-sighted Persons, confining their Views to present Occurrences, and not reflecting that what they saw was only a small Part of an exceeding large Scheme, but a few Links of a long extended Chain, could not discern the Connection of *this* Life with *another*, where all its obvious Irregularities will be fully adjusted.

BUT we Christians have our Prospect stretched out beyond the Bounds of Time. *We have Life and Immortality brought to Light by the Gospel (n).* We know assuredly, that there shall be a State of Retribution; and that the Hour is coming, when a manifest Difference shall be made *between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not (o).*

THAT every one shall hereafter share in Happiness or Misery, as his Actions here have been good or Evil, is the fundamental Doctrine of Revelation, to imprint which deeply on our Minds, for as to influence our Practice, is its grand and ultimate End: And if we believe infallibly the one to be true, we must as firmly believe the other to be

(n) 2 Tim. i. 10.

(o) Mal. iii. 18.

be certain, and consequently order all our SERM.
Behaviour with a View to it, nor ever be X.
weary in well-doing.-----

The Prophet *Isaiah* delivers himself very pertinently to the Purpose, *Say ye to the Righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the Fruit of their Doings. We unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the Reward of his Hands shall be given him* (p).-----

However it must not be dissembled that these Words may possibly have been spoken with respect to the Rewards and Punishments of this Life; yet as the earthly *Canaan* was typical of the heavenly, all the temporal Blessings and Curses written in the Law are to be spiritually applied under the Gospel. The Promises and Threatenings are in both Cases suitable to the Dispensations they enforce. The Ordinances of *Moses* are carnal, and so are his Sanctions; the Institutions of *Christ* are spiritual, and such accordingly are his Motives to Obedience.---

He leaves the *present* World under the same general Providence as formerly; but reserves the *future* to his special Ordering and Direction, and has most expressly declared, that he, the *Son of Man* shall come in the *Glory of his Father with the Holy Angels,*
and

SERM. and shall reward every one according to his
 X. Works (q),---and that in the End of the
 World the Son of Man shall send forth his
 Angels, and they shall gather out of his King-
 dom all Things that offend, and them that
 do Iniquity; and shall cast them into a Fur-
 nace of Fire: There shall be wailing and
 gnashing of Teeth. Then shall the Righteous
 shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their
 Father (r).

ST. Paul likewise speaking of the Revela-
 tion of the righteous Judgment of God, affirms,
 that he will render to every Man according to
 his Deeds: To them who by patient Continuance
 in well-doing, seek for Glory, and Honour,
 and Immortality; eternal Life: But unto them
 that are contentious and do not obey the Truth,
 but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and
 Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every
 Soul of Man that doth Evil (s).---So that
 be the Distribution of Good and Evil in
 this Life never so promiscuous, everlasting
 Happiness, we are sure, is promised to those
 who persevere in well-doing, and endless
 Misery is threatened to all such as fall back
 unto their own Wickedness, and persist in Sin
 and Disobediencce. AND

(q) St. Matth. xvi. 27. (r) St. Matth. xiii. 41, 42, 43.

(s) Rom. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

SERM.

X.

AND as a farther Encouragement to the Continuance of our Industry and Labour, we should consider, that we shall not only *reap in due Season if we faint not*, but shall also receive an Increase adequate to the exactness of our Culture, and our watchfulness over the growing Crop.

IF, after the Seed of the Word has been sown in our Hearts and watered with the Dew of heavenly Grace, we take Care that it shall strike deep Root, in good Thoughts;—sprout up into pious Resolutions,---branch up into virtuous Actions, and ripen into settled Habits of Religion, a most fruitful Harvest may safely be depended on.---It is not in the Husbandry of the Soul as in the Husbandry of the Ground: In the latter, the best Returns do not always follow the greatest Cost and Pains; but in the former, the most unwearied Affiduity will infallibly meet with the largest Produce; in this Sense *He that sows plenteously shall reap also plenteously; and whoever continues steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the Works of Lord, shall find at the last, that his Labour hath not been in vain in the Lord.*

THE

SERM.

X.

THE same Scriptures which ascertain our future Condition according to the Quality of our present Works, ensure to us also a Happiness answerable to the Measure of their Goodness: And as a Spur to our persevering Improvement we are encouraged to hope for a Reward proportioned to the Advances we make in Holiness and Virtue, and to the Difficulties and Discouragements we meet with in making them.---This may justly be inferred from what our Lord tells his Disciples, *In my Father's House are many Mansions (t)*, for what can this multiplicity of Habitations in the Regions above imply, besides a Difference in the Degrees of Glory? *I go to prepare a Place for you,--and, Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you and persecute you; and shall say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake: Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven (u)*,---i. e. Their future Joys shall be proportioned to their present Sufferings. Otherwise, if they whose Lot it is to be ill treated for their firm Adherence to their Saviour and his Gospel, shall not receive a more excellent Recompence, and be admitted to higher Degrees of

(t) St. John xiv. 2.

(u) St. Matth v. 11, 12.

of Glory than those who with an equal SERM.
 Measure of Righteousness endure no such X.
 Persecution; the former are manifestly in a
 worse Condition with Respect to one Part
 of their Being than the latter; nor can it be
 discerned wherein the peculiar Blessedness
 ensured to them by their Redeemer will
 consist.---May it not be said of them, who
 have fought manfully in the Cause of Re-
 ligion, and resisted *even unto Blood, striving*
against Sin, and testifying against Sinners,
 in Case no distinguished Bliss awaits them,
 what the Apostle says of good Chris-
 tians at large on Supposition of having in
this Life only Hope in Christ, as they would
be of all Men most miserable (x), so these
 would be of all holy Men, undergoing the
 deepest Calamities in this World, without
 an adequate Requital in the next?---But we
 have yet more evident Proof hereof from
 our Blessed Saviour's Assurances given to
 his Apostles, who were constant Attendants
 on his Person, and great Sufferers for his
 Cause, that a more eminent Share of Glory
 should be conferred upon them, implied
 in the Promise of *their sitting upon Twelve*
Thrones, and judging the Twelve Tribes of
Israel (y). So the Prophet Daniel observed
 before

(x) 1 Cor. xv. 19.

(y) St. Luke xxii. 30.

SERM. before (z). *They that be wise shall shine as*

X. *the Brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever. There is one Glory of the Sun, says St. Paul (a) another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars; for one Star differs from another Star in Glory. So also is the Resurrection of the Dead.--- And, He that receiveth a Prophet, says Christ Jesus himself, in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward: and he that receiveth a righteous Man in the Name of a righteous Man, shall receive a righteous Man's Reward. And whosoever doth give to drink unto one of these little Ones a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward (b).*

Now, what can be plainer Proofs than these, of a Variety of future Blessedness? Nor ought it to stagger our Belief in this Article, that our Lord informs us in his Parable of the Labourers, how they, who had worked many Hours, and they who had served but one, were pay'd at the Close of the Day, *every Man a Penny (c)*, for this Parable clearly relates not to the

(z) Daniel xii. 3.

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 41.

(b) St. Matth x. 41, 42.

(c) St. Matth. xx. 9.

the Distribution of Rewards in *another* Life, SERM.
but to the Admission of all Mankind, both X.

Gentiles and Jews, to an Equality of Gospel-Privileges in *this*. And though there shall certainly be *Fullness of Joy at God's right Hand*, yet this must be understood according to our several Measures and Capacities; which being diverse, it is so far from an Argument against the Diversity of the Gifts of Glory as well as Grace, that it is a strong Confirmation of it. Having therefore these Promises, *dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of the Lord* (d).

WE should take Notice, that were we to cool in our Affection towards heavenly Treasures as not to strive for the highest Prize by going on unto Perfection, yet it is impossible to stand still in the Duties of Religion. We cannot keep the Ground we have gained, without gaining more: If we do not advance we must retreat: if we do not grow better we must grow worse; consequently without Perseverance we must lose the Things that we have wrought, and reduce ourselves to a more deplorable State, even by our temporary Obedience. To prevent this, our Apprehensions are alarmed with the Threatenings

of

SERM. of a Misery suitable to the Size of our Guilt.

X. All finally incorrigible Sinners shall feel the certain Vengeance of God; but then they shall feel it in diverse Proportions, as their Offences are more aggravated or more numerous. The same Rule will be observed both in Punishments and Rewards; and as all the Righteous will not be admitted to equal Heights of Honour and Happiness, so neither will all the Wicked be sunk to an equal Depth of Shame and Wretchedness.--- That there shall be such an exact Correspondence between Crimes and Sufferings, we have our Saviour's Authority for maintaining, who in express Words teaches us to believe, that *some shall be beaten with many Stripes, and some with few (e), and that it shall be more tolerable for some Sinners in the Day of Judgment than for others (f).*

ARE these Things so? And will not Revolters from Piety to Profaness, from Virtue to Immorality, consider a little upon what Grounds they are likely to stand? If, as we have already seen, they will be deservedly ranked among the most heinous Transgressors, having no Plea to make either of

(e) St. Luke xii. 47, 48.

(f) St. Matth. xi.

of Ignorance or Inability, since they wilfully renounce what they both knew and practised, how can they hope to escape the heaviest of God's Wrath, the intensest Degree of Punishment in that Place of unspeakable Anguish, where *mighty Sinners shall be mightily tormented* (f).

THESE are plain Threatenings of the Gospel, and God's Truth as well as Justice is concerned to make them good.----*Knowing then the Terrors of the Lord*, let us be persuaded to preserve ourselves from them. Let those, who have basely fallen back unto *their own Wickedness*, hasten to extricate themselves out of so dangerous a Situation, being quickened by the most awful Declarations of Holy Scripture, *that the Lord shall reward the Evil-doers according to their Wickedness* (g), and, *that they shall eat of the Fruit of their own Way, and be filled with their own Devices* (h), and let others, who have hitherto acted more wisely, have been careful to please God, to keep themselves in his Love, and conscientiously to do his Commandments; let them continue *in the Faith* grounded and settled, and not be moved

A a

away

(f) Wisd. vi. 6.

(g) 2 Sam. iii. 39.

(h) Prov. i. 31.

away from the Hope of the Gospel which they have heard (i); let them *beware, lest being led away by the Error of the Wicked, they fall from their own Stedfastness.* For we are made Partakers of Christ, if we hold the Beginning of our Confidence stedfast unto the End (k).—If the Certainty of future Blessedness, the least Portion of which the best of Men are not capable of meriting, and can rather qualify themselves for, than entitle themselves to, be the most powerful Motive to engage us in a religious Course; shall not the Assurance of high Degrees of Glory, annexed to proportionable Degrees of Goodness keep us steady and fixed? effectually prevent our ever flying from the Field of Battle through Cowardice, deserting to the Tents of Ungodliness through Treachery, or giving our Hearts any Cause to reproach us as long as we live?

But who is sufficient for these Things (l)? It is not in Man to order his Steps aright (m); his Abilities are sadly impaired whilst the Force of Temptations is terribly increased: Yet are we not to give up our Cause as lost, or sit down in a desponding Posture as if

(i) Coloss. i. 23.

(k) 2 St. Pet. iii. 17.

(l) 2 Cor. ii. 16.

(m) Jer. x. 23.

if the Prize offered us were impossible to be won. No, on the contrary we are to exert our best Endeavours, and then we need not doubt but the Divine Succours will come into our Assistance.

THE Props of human Industry, indeed, are all weak and precarious, but the Foundation of God stands sure; in him only it is, that we can be strong, and in the Power of his Might may be more than Conquerors. Let us then on the one Hand be cautious of resting too confidently on our own Bottom, and on the other, of being careless and remiss in our Endeavours; but in humble Reliance upon heavenly Aid, let us labour to persevere in the Ways of Piety and Holiness to the End of our Lives, then will God give us our Reward, and with *Well done good and faithful Servants*, bid us enter into the Joy of our Lord (n).

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preserve you faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and for ever. Amen. (o).

(n) St. Matth. xxv. 21.

(o) St. Jude 24, 25.

12 JY 62

